BUSINESS / B1

P3.82-trillion gov't debt seen in 2007

ACROSS / A15

Lim may run vs De Venecia in Pangasinan

ENTERTAINMENT / D1

Lino speaks up on relationship with KC

METRO / A19

Man shoots neighbor for urinating in front of house, is shot dead by responding cops

NEWS / A2

Valentine's Day bomb plot foiled, say police

DAY IS not complete without the marching band: Here come the ... politicians.
REM ZAMORA

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
ALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
ay, February 13, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 67 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Will 'Boom Tarat Tarat' win votes for politicos?

By Christian V. Esguerra

IT'S "BOOM TARAT TARAT" FOR AMIGO, "PARA Sa'yo" for Tol, and "Sugod" for Chiz.

Former members of the Spice Boys and the Bright Boys are reprising their Estrada-era political battle, with seats in the Senate at stake this time.

With youth, looks and probably everything

WILL/ A10

Circus comes to town

Show biz stars outshine Team Unity, UNO bets

By Nikko Dizon, Michael Lim Ubac and Leila B. Salaverria

THE CARNIVAL IS BACK in town and President Macapagal-Arroyo, singing campaign jingles, is right in the midst of it, along with some of the local entertainment industry's biggest attractions.

In a frenzied day that marked the deadline for the filing of senatorial candidacies, administration, opposition and independent politicians yesterday trooped to the Commission on Elections headquarters to formalize their bids for Senate seats in the May 14 elections.

But in terms of public attention, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, running as an independent, was outshone by Megastar Sharon Cuneta, his wife.

Reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto, running under Malacañang's banner, was no match to the attention received by his spouse, Star for All Seasons and Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos.

One aspirant came with a brass band.

Maverick Sen. Joker Arroyo, a known champion of opposition causes who raised opposition hackles the other day by declaring that President Arroyo should be allowed to finish her term because they couldn't offer anything better, seemed above the fanfare.

Among the earliest to file his candidacy yesterday, Arroyo wore a simple, collared shirt without any show biz stars by his side.

Luxury and sport utility vehicles crowded the streets alongside and in front of the Comelec headquarters.

Blocks away, at the Manila Hotel, Ms Arroyo was putting on her own show.

Speaking at a two-day convention of her party Kampi on the eve of the start of the 90-day campaign season, she rallied support

CIRCUS/ A9

MEGA POWER. Sen. Francis Pangilinan and wife, singer-actress Sharon Cuneta, walk to the Comelec office in Intramuros on Monday. REM ZAMORA

STAR FOR ALL SEASONS. Sen. Ralph Recto and wife, actress and Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos, arrive at the poll office. REM ZAMORA

12TH PICK. Sulu Sultan Jamalul Kiram III is all smiles as he leaves after filing his candidacy. EDWIN BACASMAS

EDWIN BACASMAS

PROVINCIAL FORCE. Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson (center) is backed up by four governors—(from left) Armand Sanchez of Batangas, Raul Lee of Sorosogon, Leandro Verceles of Catanduanes, Antonio Kho of Masbate—and boxing champ Manny Pacquiao.

No photo-ops with Erap hurting opposition

By Volt Contreras and Alcuin Papa

GEARING UP FOR A TOUGH ELECTION campaign, opposition leaders have missed "crucial" face-to-face meetings with detained ex-President Joseph Estrada since police began restricting his visitors and the use of his mobile phones, his spokesperson said yesterday.

Lawyer Rufus Rodriguez said Estrada could not have photo opportunities with opposition candidates both in the local and national polls if he continued to be "isolated" at his Tanay, Rizal, rest house.

In contrast, some candidates in the 2004 elections were able to see Estrada in detention and had their photographs taken with him. The charismatic actor-turned-political kingpin endorsed the candidates by raising their hands—a usual image in campaign posters.

"Many of them won because of those posters," Rodriguez said.

"He would have given us many inputs on how our campaign is to be done and who are the local candidates he would recommend," Estrada's spokesperson said in an interview with the INQUIRER on the eve of the official campaign period for the Senate race.

Rodriguez said that such a role, including raising the hands of opposition candidates, could not just be "delegat-

NO PHOTO-OPS/ A11

SWEET VINDICATION

Defiant Dixie Chicks bag 5 Grammy Awards

LOS ANGELES—THE DIXIE CHICKS completed a defiant comeback at the Grammy Awards, winning five trophies after being shunned by the American country music establishment over the group's anti-Bush comments leading up to the Iraq invasion.

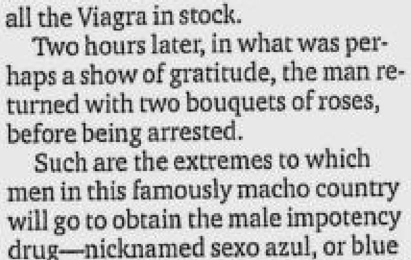
The Texas trio won record and song of the year for the no-regrets anthem "Not Ready to Make Nice." They also won best country album, which was ironic considering that the group said they did not consider themselves country artists anymore.

"I'm ready to make nice!" lead singer Natalie Maines exclaimed as the group accepted the album of the year award. "I think people are using their freedom of speech with all these awards. We get the message."

Mary J. Blige's comeback also was richly rewarded: She received three trophies for her double-platinum album "The Breakthrough." The Red Hot Chili Peppers won three as well for their double-disc "Stadium Arcadium."

Country singer and former "American

DEFIANT DIXIE/ A4


QUE HORROR! DONDE ESTA AMOR?

Spain says adios siesta, hola Viagra

MADRID, SPAIN—A FEW MONTHS ago, a man walked into a pharmacy in Madrid, pulled out two toy guns and told the attendants to hand over all the Viagra in stock.

Two hours later, in what was perhaps a show of gratitude, the man returned with two bouquets of roses, before being arrested.

Such are the extremes to which men in this famously macho country will go to obtain the male impotency drug—nicknamed sexo azul, or blue sex, by Spaniards—which costs $104 for a box of eight blue diamond-

SPAIN SAYS/ A4

Even in a hospital, it's a story of the heart

By Tony S. Bergonia

AT FIRST GLANCE, THERE SEEMS TO BE nothing wrong with Flordeliza Natividad.

The 22-year-old former garments factory worker giggles as she walks to what has become her home for the last six days—one of several beds separated by mint green curtains at the Philippine Heart Center (PHC) charity ward.

Her stay at the PHC could be the last stop in a journey that started in a mountain village in Zambales. It was made possible by Lotus Foundation Inc., a little known group that has also brought six others, including a child, for treatment at the PHC.

Irene Valenton, who started Lotus in the Philippines, says it's a journey that would put Flordeliza through open heart surgery. It's an expensive operation that Valenton says she hopes would coincide with Valentine's Day tomorrow.

"It's a story of the heart," she says.

Flordeliza grins and giggles. Those are her ways of greeting visitors and, in doing so, her barely 5-foot frame shakes, making her look like a happy 12-year-old at play.

The PHC-issued hospital gown—white with small, red hearts printed on it—hangs like oversized pajamas over her body.

Doctors who diagnosed her say she has congenital heart disease. Like many others who suffer from this type of ailment since birth, Flordeliza had been unaware of it.

Just a few days ago, she was with her family in San Marcelino, in a hut that stands on a borrowed lot.

In her teens, she says she knew something was wrong with her, but didn't pay attention to what her body felt.

"I easily get tired," Flordeliza says in an interview at her hospital bed.

Despite that, she got work at a Kore-

EVEN/ A6

Second FrontPage

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EZ2
17 20

FOUR DIGIT
7 0 1 8

SUERTRES
Mid-Day
7 2 4
Evening
2 3 8
(All in exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45
4 12 21 22 37 42
P9,921,472.20

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern sections of Northern and Central Luzon will have cloudy skies with scattered light rains. Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/02/12/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Cops bare Valentine's Day bomb plot by Abus, MILF

By Nancy C. Carvajal

POLICE HAVE UNCOVERED A PLOT BY THE AL-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to bomb areas in Makati and Zamboanga cities on Valentine's Day.

Chief Supt. Reynaldo Varilla, head of the National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO), in a memorandum, directed police in Metro Manila to step up security measures to preempt the reported terror plans.

A copy of the directive was secured by the INQUIRER yesterday.

Varilla said intelligence information revealed the MILF's special operations group (SOG), the ASG and its affiliate, the Rajah Solaiman Movement, would attack an undisclosed area in Makati and the Plaza Fair department store in Zamboanga "on or before" Valentine's Day.

Also yesterday, the Philippine National Police was placed on "heightened alert" as of 8 a.m. today, Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said. This means half of the 118,000-strong PNP will have to be at their posts at all times.

The PNP spokesperson said the NCRPO had ordered more patrols, especially in mass transportation systems like the MRT and the LRT, as well as other vital government installations.

However, he said there had been no "specific intelligence information" to indicate terrorists would launch an attack to "commemorate" the Valentine's Day bombings in 2005 that killed seven people and wounded 150 others in the cities of Makati, General Santos and Davao. Four of the dead were in Makati.

Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Solaiman, who was killed last month, had announced the 2005 bombings 30 minutes before the attacks and described them as the ASG's "Valentine's gift" to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In his directive, Varilla ordered metro police to step up security measures and intelligence. "Monitor and institute appropriate security measures to preempt the plan," said Varilla.

Varilla said initial intelligence reports indicated that in December 2006, three bomb experts from the MILF had inspected potential targets in Metro Manila.

He said the plan was to be carried out by one "Rayjee Van Dongon," alias Abu Tarik, described as a former member of MILF lost command, and one Rainer del Rosario.

Among the ASG-MILF-SOG members allegedly involved in the plan were Bade Abubakar, Abdulbasit Abubakar Kalaing, Ober Ukad and Benjamin Lampuni.

He added that further intelligence reports indicated that a senior ASG member from Lantawan, Basilan, identified as Totoh Sali was monitored to be at Globo de Oro, in Quiapo, Manila, towards the end of December.

Another alleged MILF member only known to the police as "Bogs" was also supposed to join the group of Sali.

Two weeks ago, police and Marines raided a suspected Moro terrorist hideout on an island in Laguna Lake, killing one man and arresting three. Five others escaped. The raid, police officials said, was prompted by an intelligence report that terrorists planned to stage bombings on Valentine's Day. *With Alcuin Papa*

SC seeks comments on voided Comelec deal

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS ordered Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez and officials of the Commission on Elections to comment on the petition seeking the filing of criminal charges against the latter in connection with the voided P1.3-billion poll automation deal.

The petition was filed in December last year by former Senate President Jovito Salonga's Kilosbayan Foundation and the Bantay Katarungan Foundation.

The petition also sought to nullify the Ombudsman's resolution absolving Comelec officials from any liability for approving the controversial deal.

Kilosbayan said the Ombudsman should be compelled to file criminal charges against Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and Commissioners Resurreccion Borra, Florentino Tuazon, Rufino Javier, Mehol Sadain, Luzviminda Tangcangco and Pablo Lantion for entering into an alleged anomalous deal.

In a Jan. 30 resolution, the high court gave Gutierrez and the Comelec officials 10 days upon being given notice of the order within which to file their comments.

Earlier, the high tribunal also asked Gutierrez to comment on a petition filed by opposition lawmakers seeking to reverse its ruling clearing the Comelec officials of any wrongdoing for the contract.

The Supreme Court earlier voided the P1.3-billion poll automation contract which the Comelec had awarded to Mega Pacific for violating the law and the poll body's own bidding rules. The court also said Mega Pacific's counting machines were vulnerable to election fraud.

The high tribunal ordered the Ombudsman to determine the criminal liability of those involved in the awarding of the contract.

But the Ombudsman said none of the Comelec officials could be criminally charged for the deal, claiming the evidence it received showed no malice, bad faith or partiality on the part of the poll officials.

The Ombudsman's ruling has been roundly criticized, with Salonga describing the decision as an "unthinkable reversal" of the high court ruling.

Scout Rangers kill 2 Abu members on Jolo

SOLDIERS OF THE ELITE ARMY Scout Rangers yesterday exchanged fire with about 40 Abu Sayyaf bandits in Talipao town on Jolo island, killing two and capturing two others, the military said.

Army commander Brig. Gen. Reynaldo Mapagu said the rebels were led by Albader Parad, who carries a $15,000 bounty on his head.

There were no casualties among the government troops.

Earlier yesterday, two gunmen were killed and two were arrested after they opened fire on Philippine Marines who were approaching the village of Andanan, in Luuk town in Sulu, Marine spokesperson Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan said.

Col. Cesar Atienza, commander of the 2nd Marine Brigade, said those killed, wounded and arrested were not Abu Sayyaf members but civilians fighting a clan war in Andanan.

Atienza said the soldiers, who were on their way to a mission on Mount Parangan, were "caught in the crossfire between two feuding families."

"Suddenly, they (soldiers) were greeted with bullets," he said.

Atienza explained that his troops were mistaken by the group of Bioh Rakih of Andanan to be followers of his enemy, a certain Rawah Sahali of Barangay Sakubang, also in Luuk.

He said the government forces responded with gun fire when fired upon. "We didn't even know they were all armed civilians," he said, adding that a soldier was injured in the shooting.

Atienza said the three civilians the unit arrested were brought to the Luuk police station. "We have filed charges of violation of the gun ban and attempted murder by directly harassing our troops," he said.

Apart from an estimated 350 Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, Muslim rebels from the Moro National Liberation Front also are active on Jolo.

The MNLF was the largest Muslim separatist group and signed a peace accord with the government in 1996. Many of its members, however, have refused to disarm and have maintained strongholds on Jolo and nearby islands.

The MNLF guerrillas later accused the government of reneging on promises to deliver political and economic concessions to predominantly Muslim areas. *AP; with a report from Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

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Leviste hearing reset

THE SCHEDULED ARraignment today of ex-Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste for his alleged murder of long-time friend and aide Rafael de las Alas has been postponed for next week.

Citing "complexities" of the issues, Leviste's lawyers earlier filed a motion to transfer the murder case to another court.

In a closed-door hearing yesterday, Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150, heard arguments from both sides and rescheduled the arraignment to Feb. 19 at 9 a.m.

Leviste's lawyer, Henry Capela, was disappointed with the order, saying that it only showed the judge's partiality in handling the case.

"This is a stunt to show that he is not in a hurry to decide on the case... The resolution is illogical because upgrading the case to murder was more complex but he resolved it immediately without giving us time to file our comment," Capela told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

But State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, who worked for the elevation of the ex-governor's homicide charge to murder, said he believed in the impartiality of the judge. *Jocelyn R. Uy and Margaux C. Ortiz*

Kampi to ensure 90% poll victory, says Puno

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo's party Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) yesterday declared that its increased membership and wider geographic reach could help deliver a 90-percent victory for the administration's candidates for Congress.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, the party's president on leave, said Kampi's membership had swollen to 55 congressmen, seven governors, 15 vice governors, 74 board members, 575 mayors, 249 vice mayors and 396 councilors.

He added that the numbers were expected to increase even more in the coming weeks.

With such numbers, added to those of other pro-administration groups Lakas-CMD, the Nationalist People's Coalition and the Atienza wing of the Liberal Party, Puno said, he expected the administration to secure 90 percent of the seats in Congress.

"The combined political machinery of all the member-parties of the ruling coalition and the individual track records of its candidates who are known to practice the politics of performance and reform instead of the politics of inaction and obstructionism will spell the landslide victory of the pro-administration ticket," Puno said.

Sources close to Puno had earlier told the INQUIRER that 17 more congressmen will join Kampi before the formal campaign period starts.

Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, Kampi president, told the INQUIRER that the party had adopted the 12 senatorial candidates of the administration's Team Unity ticket.

To ensure a good showing in the polls, Villafuerte added, Kampi and the other parties under the administration coalition would also meet to resolve any differences that may crop up in the congressional districts and come up with common candidates for the House.

"We will find meeting points with the Lakas, NPC and LP-Atienza wing in the hope of coming up with common candidates down to the district level," Villafuerte said.

Villafuerte said he would represent Kampi in the discussions while Speaker Jose de Venecia would attend for Lakas, Rizal Rep. Michael John Duavit for the NPC and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza for the pro-administration wing of the LP.

Solon points out prohibition in foreign service movements

A CONGRESSMAN HAS CALLED the attention of the Department of Foreign Affairs to a Commission on Elections resolution prohibiting the transfer, promotion, extension or recall from duty of any member of the foreign service between July 26, 2006, and Aug. 12, 2007.

Rep. Hermilando Mandanas (LP, Batangas) yesterday said Comelec Resolution No. 7688 dated July 17, 2006, prescribes activities and the period within which certain acts are prohibited in connection with the May 14, 2007, elections. The resolution extends to members of agencies attached to the foreign service.

The resolution therefore covers the replacement of Ambassador Lauro Baja, Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations, by retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide, who was recently appointed to the UN post by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

If the Comelec resolution were to be strictly followed, Baja could not be recalled and Davide could not take over until after Aug. 12, Mandanas said.

Davide's appointment is pending at the Commission on Appointments.

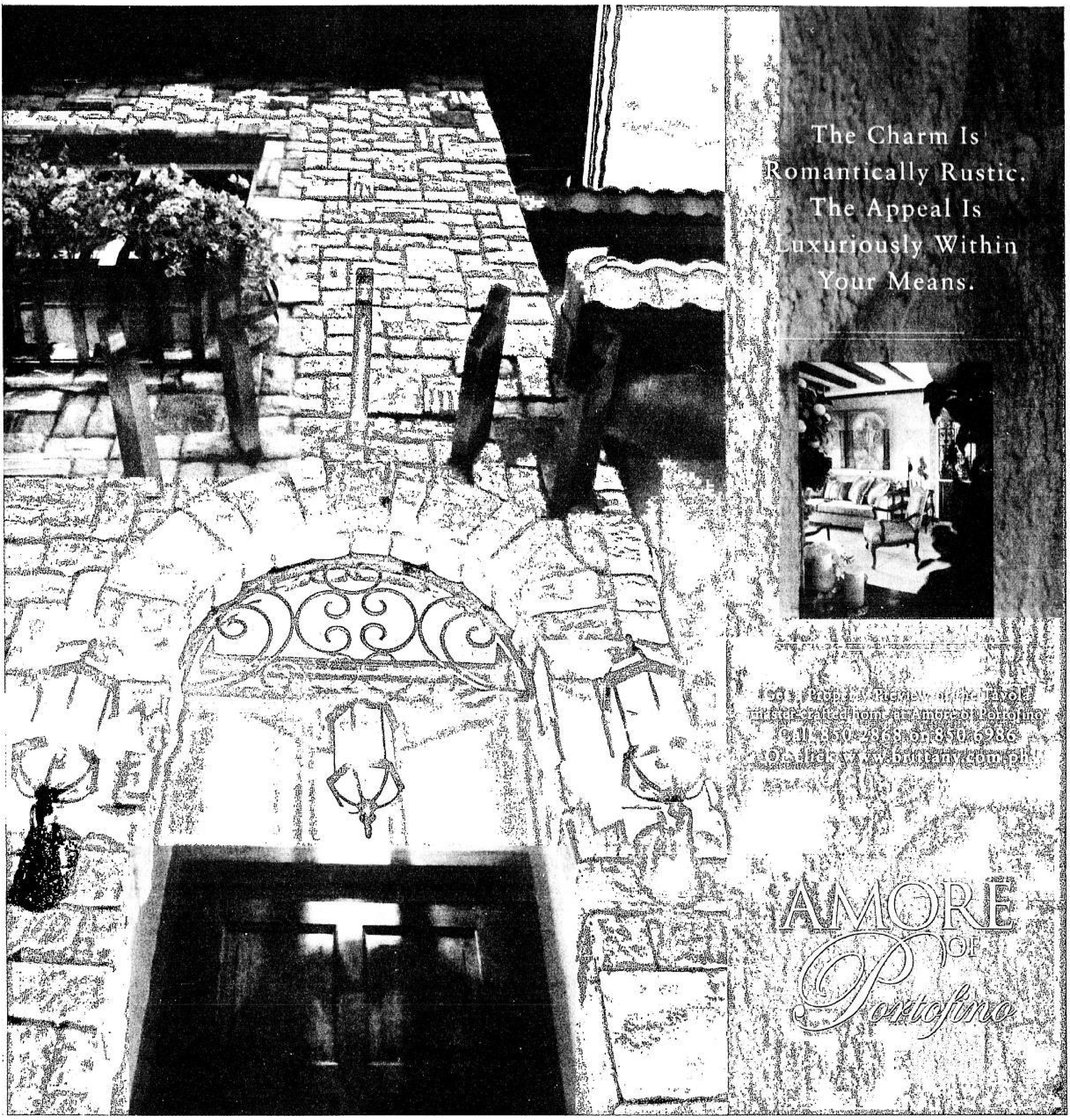
In another development, the military yesterday reminded its personnel of the prohibition against campaigning for any candidate even if he were one of their own, like Lt. Antonio Trillanes who is detained on rebellion charges but has thrown his hat into the political ring.

Trillanes is in the senatorial ticket of the United Opposition's "Grand Coalition." He is under detention in Fort Bonifacio awaiting trial before both the military tribunal and a regional trial court for his involvement in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson, told reporters that while Trillanes had been deemed separated from the service by virtue of his having filed a certificate of candidacy, his cases still placed him under the jurisdiction of the AFP.

Bacarro said that under the terms of his confinement, Trillanes cannot leave detention to campaign.

And while it is the right of military personnel to vote for Trillanes, they can't campaign for him, Bacarro said. *Christine O. Avendaño*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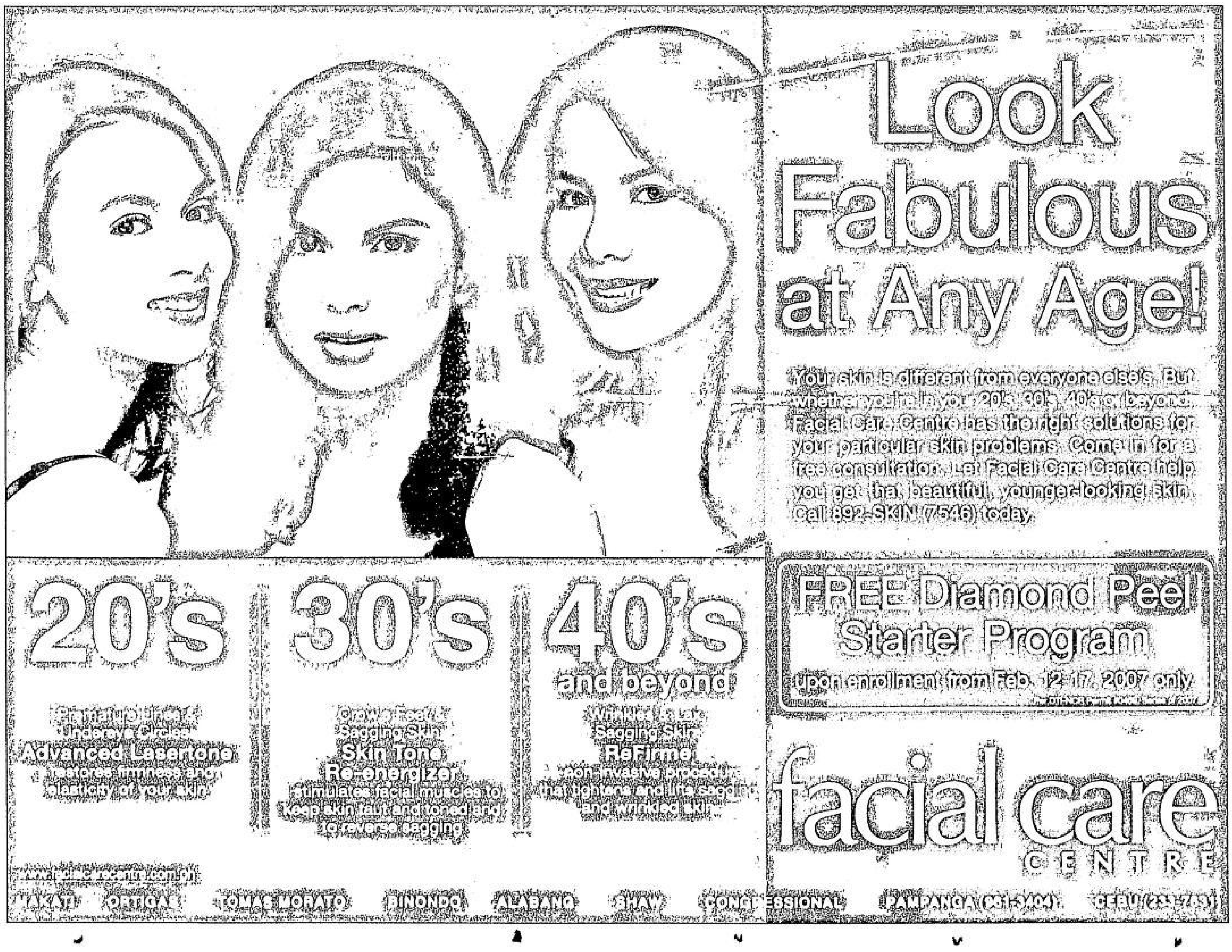
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Spain says adios siesta, hola Viagra

From page A1

shaped tablets and has become as popular with teenage clubbers as it is with men in their 70s.

"There has been a Viagra explosion in Spain," says Dr. Carlos San Martin, the country's leading sexologist who counsels couples and has tried Viagra himself.

"Some people are taking it for physiological reasons, but Viagra is also becoming a social phenomenon, a recreational drug that men of all ages are using because they want to be supermen."

Women are demanding their boyfriends get prescriptions. Young partygoers are buying tablets from dealers in discos for as much as $80 a pill, cutting them into pieces, and distributing them among their friends, even though doing so diminishes the drug's effectiveness, specialists say.

Doctors here say that some men are even faking symptoms to try to get the tablets, whose main ingredient, sildenafil citrate, helps increase the blood flow to the penis and is effective for up to four hours.

Pfizer, the maker of Viagra, says Spain has moved into the vanguard of a European Viagra trend in part because economic prosperity has transformed the country from a relaxed Mediterranean culture, where the siesta was sacrosanct, into an Anglo-Saxon-style, workaholic nation.

This new stress, says Belen Alguacil Arconada, a Pfizer spokesperson, is wreaking havoc with the Spanish male's libido.

"We used to have a siesta, to sleep all afternoon, to eat well," she adds. "But now we have become a fast-food nation where everyone is stressed out, and this is not good for male sexual performance."

Pfizer says it sold nearly 1 million boxes of Viagra in Spain last year, the equivalent of one box for every 17 men 18 and older. Globally, Pfizer earned $1.66 billion from Viagra sales in 2006.

Sociologists say that an increased willingness to address sexual problems reflects Spain's sexual liberation after the repressiveness of the Franco years.

The country's freewheeling party culture also has played a role. *New York Times News Service*

Gore welcomed with massive cheer at the Grammys

LOS ANGELES—PERHAPS UNUSUALLY for a politician, former US Vice President Al Gore was welcomed with a massive cheer when he appeared at the Grammys on Sunday to present an award at the premier music ceremony.

Gore, who has been out of the mainstream political scene since he lost the US presidential election to George W. Bush in 2000, was greeted with a huge cheer when he took the stage with singer and actress Queen Latifah.

"Wow. I can't believe that. It's unbelievable. I think they love you man, you hear that?" Queen Latifah said amid the cheers.

"I think they're cheering for you." Gore replied. "But it is still a thrill for me to be here with the musical community that has long been at the forefront of the effort to protect and renew the environment."

Gore received a similarly rapturous reception at the MTV Music Video Awards last year and is up for an Oscar later this month for his global warming documentary "An Inconvenient Truth."

Gore has repeatedly said he is not planning to run for president in 2008, despite a clamor, notably from some celebrities, for him to do so. *AFP*

FORMER US Vice President Al Gore shares the stage with Grammy-winning rapper/singer and Academy Award nominated actress Queen Latifah at the 49th Grammy Awards in Los Angeles Sunday night. AFP

Defiant Dixie Chicks bag 5 Grammy Awards

From page A1

Idol" winner Carrie Underwood won best new artist, beating out teenage R&B singer Chris Brown, and British performers Corinne Bailey Rae, James Blunt and Imogen Heap.

The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, sweet vindication after the superstars' lives were threatened and sales plummeted when Maines criticized President George W. Bush at a London concert on the eve of the Iraq war in 2003. Almost overnight, one of the most successful groups of any genre was boycotted by Nashville and disappeared from country radio.

With "Taking the Long Way," the women relied on producer Rick Rubin's guidance for an album that was more rock and less country. (Rubin, who also produced "Stadium Arcadium," was honored as producer of the year.)

New political climate

The standing ovations the Chicks received on Sunday illustrated how much the political climate has changed regarding the Iraq war, and even Bush.

"That's interesting," Maines crowed from the podium after the country award was handed out earlier in the night.

A GRAND SLAM AT THE GRAMMYS. **The defiant Dixie Chicks—from left, Emily Robison, Natalie Maines and Martie Magure—pose with their trophies at the 49th Grammy Awards in Los Angeles Sunday.** AFP

"Well, to quote the great 'Simpsons'—'Heh-Heh,'" she said, invoking a character from "The Simpsons" TV show known for his gloating laugh.

"Just kidding," added Maines. "A lot of people just turned their TVs off right now. I'm very sorry for that."

Bandmate Emily Robison noted, "We wouldn't have done this album without everything we went through, so we have no regrets."

All the trophies collected by the Dixie Chicks (who shared song of the year honors with songwriter Dan Wilson), Blige and the Chili Peppers contributed to the evening's old-school feel.

49th year

The show often derided as The Grannys embraced its baby boomer status as in its 49th year. Maybe the Recording Academy was trying to relieve the industry's glory years—2006 saw a sharp downturn in record sales, a decline that seems to grow each year as fans flock to the Internet and even ringtones to experience their tunes.

The Grammys tried to tap that new technology with its "My Grammy Moment" contest, in which three unknown singers vied for the chance to perform on stage with Justin Timberlake. Viewers determined the winner by voting on the Internet and text messaging, but the winner's performance was forgettable.

Though the show featured a medley with bright new stars such as John Mayer, John Legend and Bailey Rae, it relied heavily on the classics: Nominee Lionel Richie sang his '80s hit "Hello" and Smokey Robinson sang the Motown classic "The Tracks of My Tears" in a tribute to R&B. Rock and Roll Hall of Famers The Police, who split in 1984, reunited to kick off the show with their rendition of "Roxanne"—even though they were not nominated for anything.

Bennet and Wonder

Soon afterward, Tony Bennett and Stevie Wonder dueted on a remake of Wonder's "For Once In My Life" beat out two of the year's biggest songs—Nelly Furtado and Timbaland's "Promiscuous" and Shakira and Wyclef Jean's "Hips Don't Lie"—for best pop vocal collaboration.

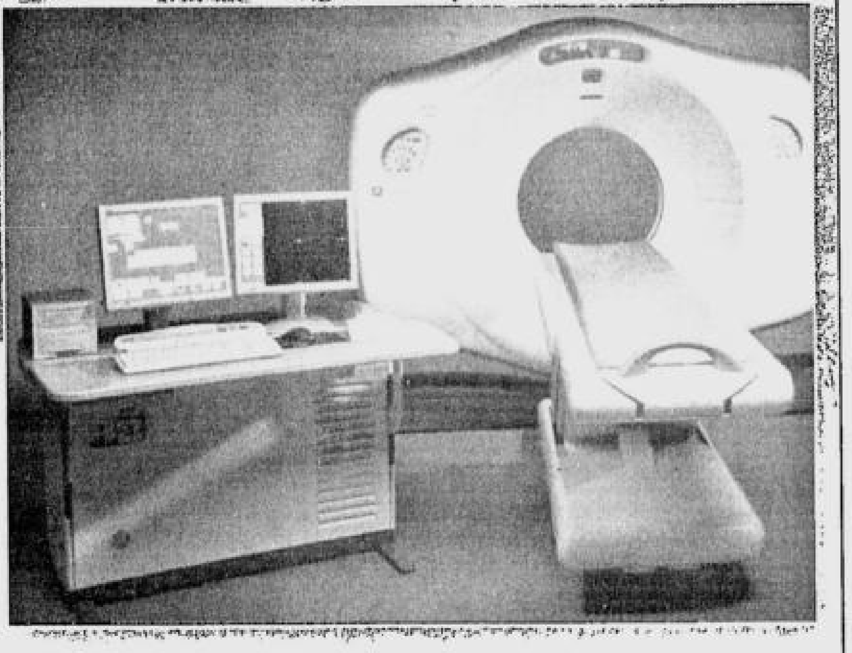
Joan Baez, Ornette Coleman, the Doors and the Grateful Dead were recognized with lifetime achievement awards.

Even some of the more contemporary artists sang songs that weren't their own. Christina Aguilera sang the late James Brown's "It's A Man's Man's Man's World" instead of her own nominated songs, while Underwood crooned The Eagles' "Desperado" and Bob Wills' "San Antonio Rose" instead of her signature tune "Jesus, Take the Wheel," which was nominated for song of the year.

But new artists were celebrated, a bit. Chris Brown injected some hot-footed funk with his "Run It," while Underwood was celebrated as the best new artist. And double winners included youngsters Mayer, T.I. and Ludacris.

Other winners included Irish singer Enya for best new age album for "Amarantine," and a tie for Latin Pop Album: "Adentro," by Arjona, and "Limon Y Sal," by Julieta Venegas.

Blige was the overall nominations leader with eight. She won best R&B album for "The Breakthrough," her double-platinum triumph, plus best female R&B performance and R&B song for "Be Without You." *AP*



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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, February 13, 2007
6th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10
Gospel: Mark 8:14-21

The disciples had forgotten to bring more bread and had only one loaf with them in the boat. Then Jesus warned them, "Keep your eyes open and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod." And they said to one another, "He saw that we have no bread."

Aware of this, Jesus asked them, "Why are you talking about the loaves you are short of? Do you not see or understand? Are your minds closed? Have you eyes that don't see and ears that don't hear? And do you not remember when I broke the five loaves among five thousand? How many baskets full of leftovers did you collect?" They answered, "Twelve." "And having seven loaves for the four thousand, how many wicker baskets of leftovers did you collect?" They answered, "Seven." Then Jesus said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

Commentary

People destroy life. And this offends God. God's heart is grieved. But one man finds favor with God. This man is Noah. He is told to build an ark and save something of each created thing, and along with his family he will be saved while the rest of the earth is purified and recreated anew. Noah obeys, the ark is made and the waters come.

The disciples forget to bring bread except for the one loaf (they have Jesus in the boat with them!). Jesus warns them to be on their guard—us too—against the leaven of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod—evils that are everywhere from church/state. Do we see or hear or understand yet? Jesus feeds 5,000 and there is enough left over for all of Israel. Then he feeds 4,000 and there is enough left over for the whole world. Don't we understand that with God there is sufficiency in sharing and economics that is based on having enough? And there is evil in war; violence, theft, lies and outward maintenance of religious society that does not have true obedience that serves others.

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Gov't vows 'full cooperation' with UN rights prober

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY pledged full cooperation with the United Nations as a special UN human rights envoy began a mission to investigate the wave of political murders in the country.

"We welcome the UN team to the Philippines in the spirit of truth and justice that President Macapagal-Arroyo has always stood for," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

"We support justice in all aspects and the government shall extend to the UN team all the assistance it needs to conduct a fruitful and fair search from the truth," he added.

Bunye said the President from the start had condemned the killings and had taken every means to get to their root and bring the perpetrators to justice.

"It's unfortunate that government efforts in this direction were hampered by the lack of witnesses and the cooperation of the victims' families as well as the militant groups," he said.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston arrived in Manila yesterday and paid a courtesy call on Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo.

"[Alston] expressed his gratitude for the unlimited access and support that the Philippine government is according his mission," spokesperson Claro Cristobal said.

Romulo cited the abolition of the death penalty as proof of the government's commitment to human rights, Cristobal said.

The leftist group Bayan, claiming that 366 of its members were among the dead, said its representatives had already met with Alston to submit documentation on the killings.

According to local rights monitors, more than 800 political activists, human rights workers, trade union officials, lawyers and judges have been murdered in the Philippines since Ms Arroyo came to power in 2001.

Most of the victims were leftist figures and some had been accused by the military of links with Maoist guerrillas waging an almost four-decade insurgency.

During the nine-day visit, Alston is expected to meet with retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo, who earlier investigated the killings and submitted a report to Ms Arroyo.

Alston, an Australian-born international lawyer who took up his post in 2004, has been an adviser to groups such as Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balana and AFP*

GMA for rebid of Transco grid

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO ON Monday said she wanted a rebidding of the country's power grid following four failed attempts to privatize the system.

"I'm leaning toward a rebidding," the President said when asked about the failure of the latest attempt to privatize the National Transmission Corp. (Transco).

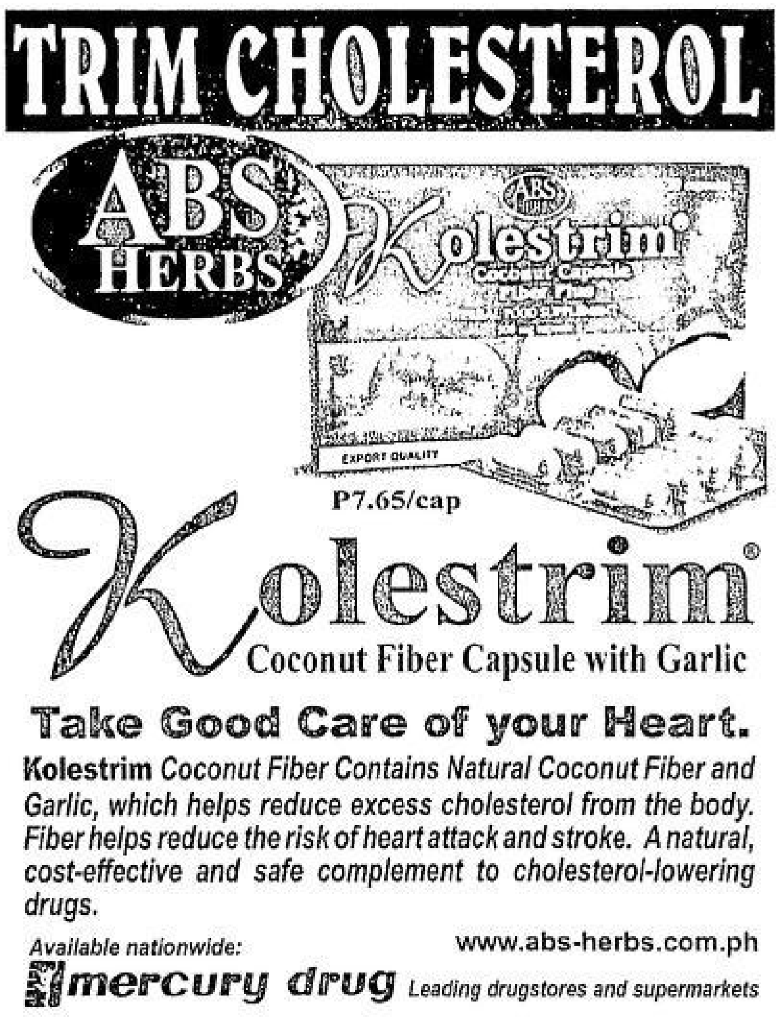
An auction for the 25-year license to run the country's estimated $2.7 billion power grid was declared a failure on Feb. 5 after only one of three potential bidders made a formal offer.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said at the time the government may resort to a negotiated deal to privatize the power grid, although he added that another round of bidding remained an option.

The group of Philippine investment firm Citadel Holdings Inc. and Terna SPA of Italy was the only bidder at the auction.

Two other bidders—a consortium comprising Triratna Holdings Corp., Malaysia's Tenaga Nasional Bhd and Newbridge Asia IV LP and the group Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. and State Grid Corp. of China—failed to come up with offers.

The government had in the past postponed the bidding due to technical and legal issues. *AFP*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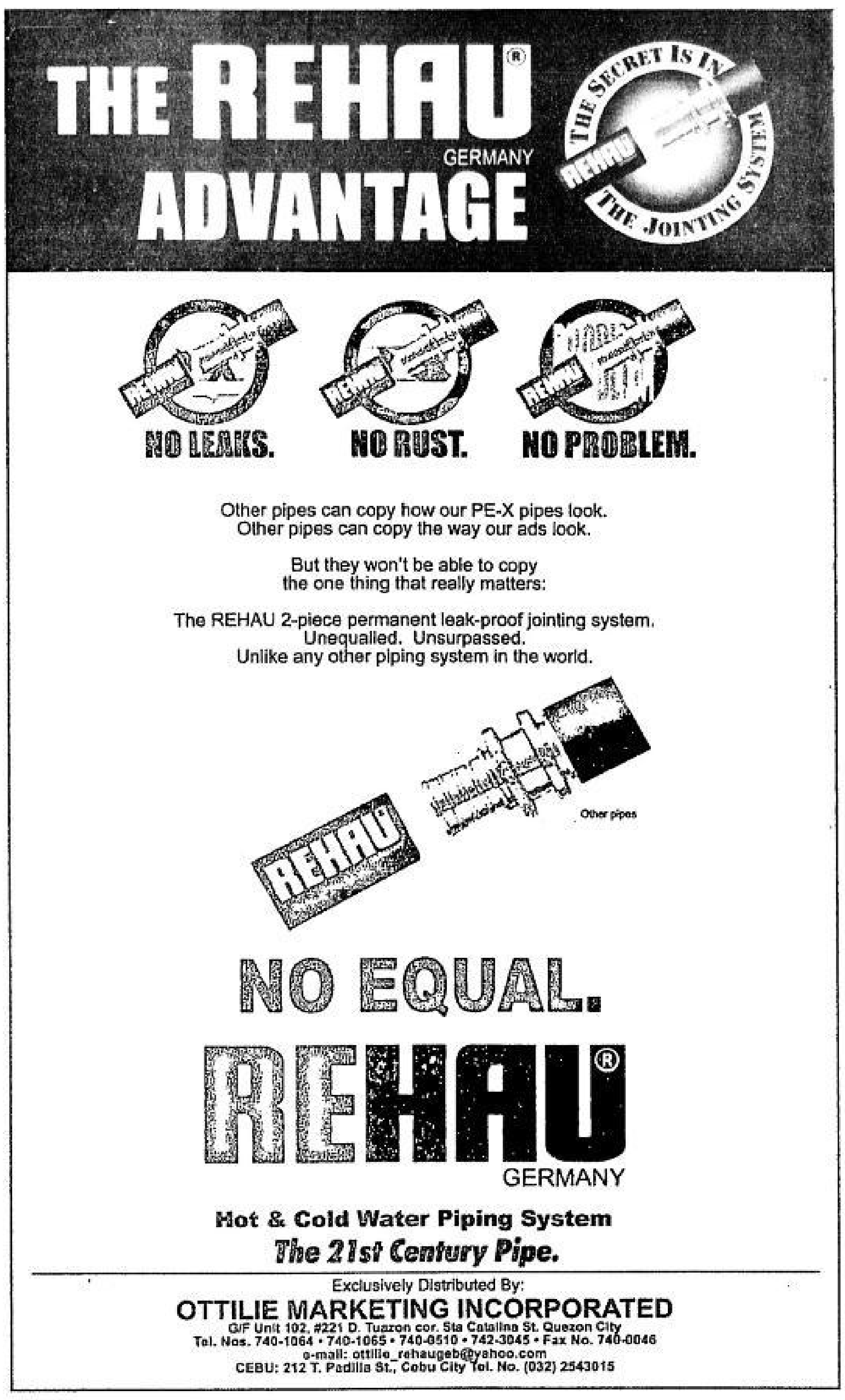
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Even in a hospital, it's a story of the heart

From page A1

an-owned garments factory in Laguna. It's a job that, she says, she got because "I begged for it."

"I gave all my salaries to my mother because my father is gone," she says. Her father, a truck driver, died at the age of 39, also of heart disease.

Work was easy at times. She says her initial assignment was just to fold the ends of garments. She was trained to sew, which became her next task.

But the disease would manifest itself soon.

"Whenever I lift things, I become too weak and tired," she says.

She stopped working as the bouts with fatigue and exhaustion grew more frequent.

Weeks after her illness forced her to quit her job, Flordeliza found herself in the corridor of a hospital in Zambales. It was there that Valenton found her alone in a wheelchair.

Valenton sought the help of her brother-in-law, Dr. Earl Yap, who suggested that Flordeliza be given a medical test. Valenton brought Flordeliza to the PHC, where she said she was told, "My heart is getting larger."

Open heart surgery

Flordeliza is awaiting open heart surgery that, at the PHC, normally costs P300,000 and up to P1 million in more expensive hospitals.

Asked if she feels nervous about the surgery, Flordeliza just giggles and shakes her head. "I'm not afraid. I'm just hopeful," she says.

RACQUEL Ladringan before she was brought to the Philippine Heart Center for tests that showed she had inoperable congenital heart disease.

PHOTO FROM IRENE VALENTON

She doesn't have to worry about the cost.

Valenton's foundation has an arrangement with the PHC for discounts and is raising money from donors in the United States.

It's Valenton that does the worrying, especially now that her foundation has started helping heart patients. She's been bringing the poor of Zambales to doctors and hospitals, but never someone suffering from a heart disease.

It's work that started when Valenton, who is from The Netherlands, felt depressed at seeing the utter poverty in the Philippines when she started to live here with husband Raul, an engineer, in 2002.

"I felt I must do something," she says. "I can turn off the TV if I see these depressing things, but I can't turn off what I see outside."

The first heart disease case her foundation brought to the PHC was that of Raquel Ladringan, 31, also from San Marcelino, Zambales.

It was a test case for Valenton and her foundation.

"We hadn't handled heart cases before," she says. "I worked out of nothing."

She just plunged into it, finding herself at the PHC asking anyone she met there, "Can I talk to a surgeon?" The persistence paid off and led to the office of Dr. Ludgerio Torres, a heart specialist and PHC director.

First heart patient

Raquel, Valenton's first heart patient, was brought in for tests.

They showed that Raquel had congenital heart disease, like Flordeliza. But unlike Flordeliza's, Raquel's case was inoperable.

Surgery won't save her life, but constant medication, and direct oxygen inhalation, could prolong it. "For how long, I can't tell," says Raquel in a phone interview.

Medicines and two oxygen tanks are delivered to her home in the mountains of San Marcelino, where she lives, every week.

Raquel also didn't know what was wrong with her when she got tired for no reason at all.

Her brother died, at 6, of heart disease and her sister, Annaliza Tuazon, has a rheumatic heart. But Raquel didn't see the link to her medical condition.

So she consulted doctors. "They told me at first that it was asthma," she says.

The disease didn't get in the way of her work at Texas Instruments in Baguio City. "I felt strong then," she says. "I was fit."

But in June 2005, right after she gave birth to her first baby, after eight years of marriage to a pastor, the disease started to wreak havoc on her body.

Nowadays, she says there are times when she's too weak to even put food in her mouth.

Like a miracle

Raquel draws strength from what she describes as the miracle that came the way of her sister.

In 1995, Annaliza was given only up to six months to live. "Now she's still around," says Raquel.

Irene Valenton, 44, says she believes in miracles, too. The miracle, she says, is finding people who "have a heart for others."

One of these people, she says, is Torres, who returned to the Philippines in 1971 after specializing at the Harvard Medical School in the United States.

He didn't have to, but he says he came back, "amid all the chaos then," to fulfill a promise he made to himself.

He, and two other doctors, are pioneers of the PHC which was inaugurated by former First Lady Imelda Marcos on Feb. 14, 1975.

FLORDELIZA Natividad with Heinrich Treutner, a German who helps raise funds for the Lotus Foundation Inc. The picture was taken prior to Flordeliza's confinement at the Philippine Heart Center. Treutner started a foundation in Germany, called Lotus Hilfsprogramme, to complement the operations of Lotus in the Philippines.

PHOTO FROM IRENE VALENTON

Those days, Torres recalls, PHC was barely filled with patients for heart surgery. "In 1975, we had to force people to have open heart surgery," he says.

Normal day at heart center

Nowadays, the queue of people waiting on patients inside intensive care units (ICU) is about 500 meters long and winding down the stairs, kept in order by a lone guard.

These are men, women and children waiting for their turn to submit papers to show proof that they, or their loved ones, are too poor to afford treatment for heart disease.

Rose Clavejo, PHC social welfare official, says the hospital gets 120 to 150 new cases a day. Screening charity patients takes all day, and the line grows longer daily, she says.

According to the Department of Health, at least 88 percent of Filipinos who die every year from diseases succumb to some form of heart ailment.

Torres says the waiting time for surgery for the poor could last months because of several things, mainly lack of funds.

He says the PHC subsidizes its charity cases through revenue from paying patients.

Gov't subsidy not enough

The P150 million that the government gives a year simply isn't enough, says Torres, so the hospital keeps a patient ratio of 80 percent paying and 20 percent charity.

"It used to be 60-40," says Torres.

Clavejo says the taxing task has its rewards, though.

One of these, she says, are "patients who are getting well and saying thank you."

"At the end of the day, we thank God that it's not us who are out there. We thank God we don't have that kind of disease," says Clavejo.

Such expressions of gratitude are abundant at the PHC.

A woman stops Irene Valenton at a crowded PHC corridor. She held her son, Geremy Almario, 6, who underwent open heart surgery and checked out on Jan. 10.

"I just wanted to thank you," the woman tells Valenton as her son played by her side.

God's work

Valenton recalls praying for the boy, who she says could barely move his legs when he was first admitted to the PHC.

"This is really God's work," Valenton tells the woman.

Torres considers the expressions of gratitude just as rewarding as his being appointed PHC director.

On an ordinary day, he says, he'll do the rounds and get thanked by patients, who are recuperating from successful surgeries, and their relatives.

He also gets calls from congressmen, senators and governors who would thank him for successful surgeries on patients they had endorsed to the PHC.

"What more can you ask for?" he says. "Isn't that enough?"

For Irene Valenton, it's about saving lives.

"He who saves one life, saves the world entirely," she says, quoting a line from her favorite movie, "Schindler's List."

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 10 issue, an article on Page A5—"P10,000-plate dinner for Loren a big hit"—misstated the name of the party under which senatorial candidate Loren Legarda is running. Legarda is running under the Nationalist—not National—People's Coalition.

* * *

IN THE SAME issue, the "Political Tidbits" column of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan—"Connie Dy's one good story"—erroneously attributed the saying, "All politics is local." The maxim came from former US Speaker Thomas O'Neill Jr., not Newt Gingrich.

* * *

IN THE FEB. 9 issue, a front-page article—"Salceda appointed Palace chief of staff"—misstated the age of newly appointed Presidential Chief of Staff Jose Ma. Sarte "Joey" Salceda. Born on Oct. 26, 1961, Salceda is 45—not 36—years old.

* * *

IN RECENT ISSUES, several articles and captions misstated the first name of the general who was part of the peace mission detained by the Moro National Liberation Front in Panamao, Sulu, last Feb. 3. He is Maj. Gen. Ben—not Benjamin—Dolorfino.

* * *

IN THE Feb. 12 issue, a headline on Page A19, "Calbayog priests to help girl found dead in fire," should have read "Priests to help mother of girl found dead in fire."

* * *

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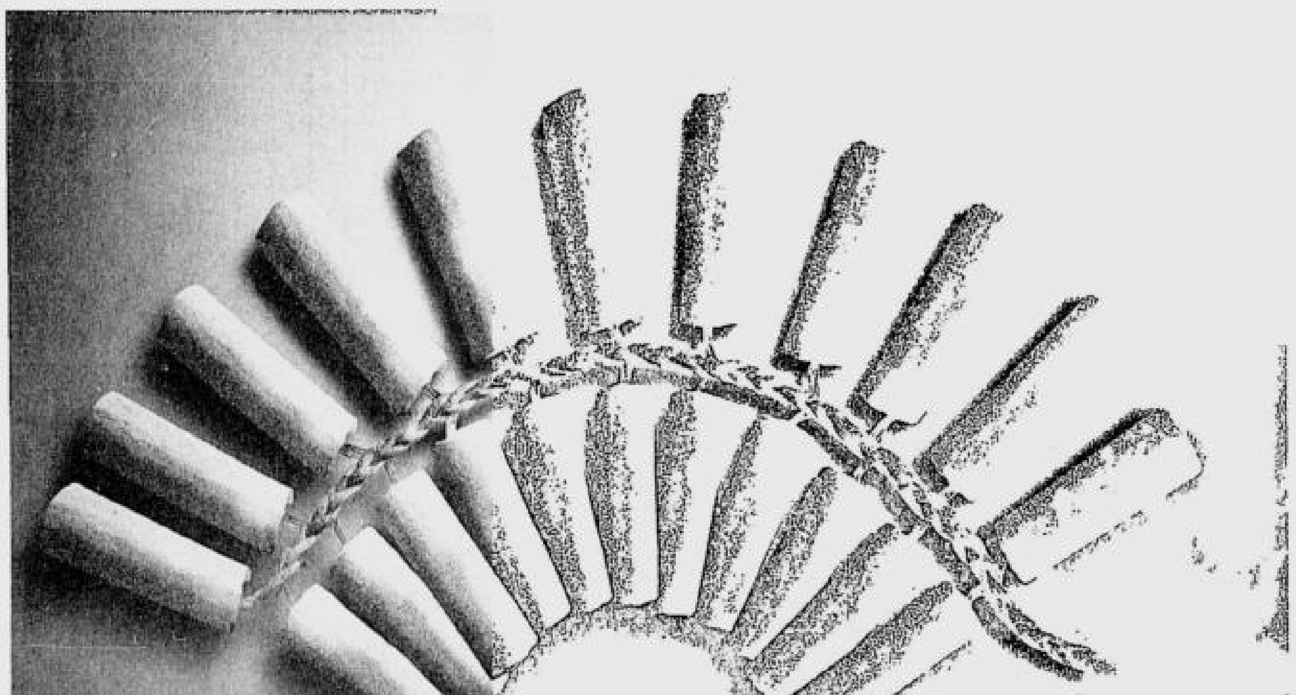

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2 try to fly on 1 ticket

CEBU PACIFIC AIR STAFF DID A double take on Saturday when they noticed they had one too many passengers on board a Manila-Dumaguete flight.

Apparently, two brothers managed to board Cebu Pacific Flight 5J-625 using a single electronic ticket, a discrepancy that delayed the weekend flight by more than three hours, prompting the police to scan the passengers' baggage several times for explosives.

Negros Oriental native Edgar Reyes, 37, and his younger brother, Edsel, were offloaded from the plane after airline staff found the latter occupying a seat that was supposed to be vacant, airport police said in a report.

The brothers, currently in the custody of the 2nd Police Center for Aviation Security based at the Manila Domestic Airport, face charges of estafa, said the detachment's chief, Senior Supt. Jose Palencia.

Based on information relayed by an airline security officer to police, Edgar checked in at 4 a.m. for his 8:15 a.m. flight on Saturday, using an e-ticket he had purchased at a promo price of P1,611.

Edsel arrived at around 6:30 a.m. and entered the pre-departure area as a chance passenger.

"He sneaked into the check-in area when the guard at the entrance was not looking," Palencia said.

Edsel then borrowed his brother's e-ticket and went to the Cebu Pacific counter, where he pretended to be Edgar Reyes and said that he lost his boarding pass, police said.

It was during the head count that the two brothers were busted and were ordered off the aircraft. *Tarra Quismundo*

Cebu ship catches fire

CEBU CITY—A FIRE BROKE OUT IN A PASsenger-cargo vessel of Gothong Lines based in this city at 10:43 a.m. Monday, destroying most of the vessel while it was docked at the Gothong Wharf in Mandaue City.

Mandaue fire marshal Chief Insp. Oscar Mayol said the blaze in the M/V Manila Bay I may have been started by welding work being done in the cabin area of the ship.

The Carlos A. Gothong Lines management has yet to issue a statement on the fire.

A Gothong employee said the vessel was undergoing its annual drydocking for several days. The Manila Bay I sails between Cebu and Nasipit twice a week. *Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas*

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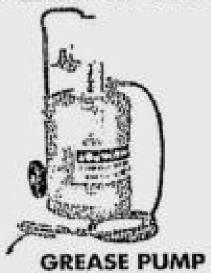
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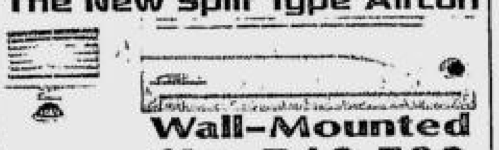
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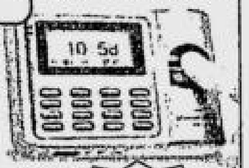
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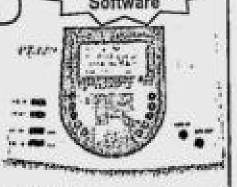
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STATEMENT OF GRATITUDE AND COMMITMENT

The Department of Labor and Employment, including its attached agencies – the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) –believe that:

- The true measure of gainful overseas employment is not simply in the number of jobs abroad that are open to our workers but also the quality of foreign employment and employers who hire them.
- Notwithstanding market forces in global migration, it remains the government's full responsibility to ascertain conditions in these markets and adopt safeguards to protect the interests and welfare of our workers.
- Overseas employment is an evolving program, which is directly affected by current global realities, trends, and events. Tough policy decisions have to be made on where we would like to move this program forward with the protection, safety and welfare of the Filipino overseas worker as our overarching goal.

These principles have led us to re-examine the deployment of Filipino household services workers abroad. Over the years, both the DFA and DOLE have seen a steadfast increase in welfare cases connected with this female-dominated sector. **Low wages, sub-human living conditions, arbitrary salary deductions, physical abuse,** and worse, cases of **rape and sexual molestation** – these are the realities that compelled the Philippine government through DOLE to introduce reforms so we could leave the low-end market for domestic helpers behind us.

Our package of reform measures for our Household Service Workers (HSWs) consists of -

1. Increasing the HSWs' minimum salary from US$200 to US$400;
2. Requiring a higher minimum age for deployment of HSWs from 18 to 23;
3. Prohibiting the collection of placement fees from HSWs, whether done prior to departure or on-site through salary deduction;
4. Requiring the possession of TESDA Household Services National Certificate II and attendance at the Language and Culture Orientation program provided for free by OWWA as assurances to the foreign employer of our HSWs' competency and capacity to adapt.

These reforms are apart from other measures that will likewise enhance the protection given to our OFWs.

Thus, in due time, we shall:

- overhaul the present **system of Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars** (P-DOS) so that they will truly assist and facilitate the HSWs' entry into their foreign workplaces;
- adopt an enhanced **system of OFW reintegration** that will fully benefit individual OFWs, their communities and the nation as a whole;
- adopt measures aimed at ensuring **the highest degree of professionalism and ethical conduct** in the placement of OFWs, locally and overseas;
- tighten **anti-illegal recruitment** and other pre-employment measures so that Filipino workers are protected even before they apply for foreign work;
- introduce innovations in the POEA **dispute resolution system** to make it fast and effective despite the deployment overseas of complaining witnesses.

These tasks are difficult enough **without having to parry blows from some industry players who are mainly motivated by economic self-interests.** This is why we are thankful to the groups below for their support to the cause of looking after the best interests of our OFWs by reducing the chance that they would be exploited in their overseas jobs.

GROUPS/SECTORS WHO HAVE EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE NEW POLICY REFORMS ON HOUSEHOLD SERVICE WORKERS (HSWs)

As of 12 FEBRUARY 2007

Episcopal Commission for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, CBCP
Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)
Federation of Free Workers (FFW)
National Confederation of Labor (NCL)
Philippine Goverment Employees Association (PGEA)
National Congress of Unions in the Sugar Industry in the Philippines (NACUSIP)
Philippine Association of Legal Service Contractors (PALSCON)
National Association of Trade Unions (NATU)
Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP)
Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)
Philippine Transport General Workers Organization (PTGWO)
Philippine Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW) with member organizations: Apostleship of the Sea-Manila (AOS), Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), CBCP-EMI, Center for Migrant Advocacy (CMA), Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC), Scalabrini Center for People on the Move (SCPM), International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)
Association for Professionalism in Overseas Employment Inc. (ASPROE)
Confederation of Filipino Overseas Workers (COFW) - HK
Filipino Community Service Network (FILCOMSIN) - HK
Guimbal Filipino Workers Association - HK
Integrated Midwives Association of the Philippines - HK
DOMO-HK (DOLE-OWWA Tulay Microsoft)
Bileg To Ilocano Association - HK
Anak Ti Villasis - HK
Bohol Philippines - HK
Galing Manggagawa Pinoy Abroad (GMPA) - HK
Migrant Ilonggo International Association - HK
Bohol HK Association
Atimonan Quezon Association -HK
Filipino Community Organizations Alliance (FILCOA) in QATAR – composed of 32 Filipino Organizations
Order of the Knights of Rizal - Middle East & Africa Region
Cabalen Aguman Capampangan, KSA
Filipino Community – Jubail, Eastern Province, KSA
Kasangga ng OFW, KSA
D' Heroes Group in Saudi Arabia - Riyadh and Al Khobar, KSA
Filipino Tenpin Bowlers of Eastern Region (Filbowler) - Al Khobar, KSA
Philippine Society of Mechanical Engineers - KSA Chapter
Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers - Eastern Province, KSA
Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants - KSA (Eastern Province) Chapter
Cebuano Integrated Security and Tribal Allies
SANGKAY Saudi Arabia
United Surigaonon Association - Saudi Arabia
Mastern Builders Association of the Philippines - Eastern Province, KSA
Guardians Brotherhood, Inc. - Jeddah Chapter
KASAPI Congress, Jeddah
Hand-to-Hand Combat Aikido, Jeddah Chapter
S. A. M. Foundation, Inc.
KAPIT BISIG, Jeddah
BSME Western Region, KSA
Cebuano-Speaking Organization in Saudi Arabia (CSOSA)
United Maguindanao Expatriates Association (UMEA)
Bagong Bicol Saro, Jeddah
Association of Cabalen Expatriates
Circulo Ilonggo, Saudi Arabia
SIGLAKAS
Boholano Community in Jeddah
Association of Ranao Engineers and Architects,Jeddah
PAMAC International
PHILMASA, International
Association of Filipino Civil Engineers, Western Region, KSA
Pangasinan Saudi Workers Association
Philippine Guardians Brotherhood, Red Sea Chapter
Aguman Kapampangan - Taipei Chapter
Bicol Association in Taipei
Filipinos Married to Taiwanese Association
OFW Family Club, Taiwan
Pundok Bisaya International - Taiwan
Tamshui Filipino Community
The United Vismin Association in Taiwan
Filipino Community Organization in Libya (FILCOL)
Filipino Muslim Community Consultative Council (FMCC) in Libya
Filipino Club of Ras Al Khaimah, UAE
Lightform International Filipino Photographers Guild, Dubai, UAE
World International Ministry, Dubai, UAE
Philippine Health Care Providers, Dubai, UAE
Central Philippine University Alumni Association, Dubai, UAE
CADD Group, Dubai, UAE
United Filipino Association in Fujairah, UAE
Alpha Phi Omega, Dubai, UAE
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International Alliance of Filipino Table Tennis Association, Dubai, UAE
Kabayan Kapit Bisig Foundation, Dubai, UAE
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Sharjah Filipino Bowling Club, Sharjah, UAE
Aguman Kapampangan, Dubai, UAE
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No song and dance for Unity ticket

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

DON'T EXPECT A BRASS BAND AND SCANTily clad women when administration-backed candidates visit your town during the campaign period.

Like salesmen hawking their trade, each Team Unity candidate will come equipped with a mobile kit composed of a projector, a video player and DVDs of the ticket's platform and profiles of the administration candidates.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, campaign strategist Reli German said Team Unity was taking the "high-tech" route in the May elections to elevate the campaign to a higher standard.

"We agreed that it's about time we raised the level of campaigning after it went down to the level of song and dance routines and mudslinging. We want it to have some meaning, not just entertainment," said German, a veteran of the campaign trail in both the Estrada and Arroyo administrations.

"We saw our advantage and that is we have a platform compared to their lone goal of ousting the President. We aim to maximize the electronic media in sending our message."

Video presentation

Based on its strategy, a Team Unity CIA (candidate in attendance) would act as the host of a 15- to 20-minute video presentation where he would introduce Team Unity's platform and the 11 other candidates.

Each video would be keyed to the candidate making the presentation show interactivity (the video was shot only starting yesterday by Malacañang's visual director Lupita Aquino Kashiwara).

Team Unity hopes to maximize the administration's strong ties with local government leaders, who are expected to bring in 50 to 70 leaders from their respective areas to attend the sessions.

Spreading the message

"We hope the local leaders would bring the message to their constituents," said German. The so-called "Pulong-Sulong" sessions will start in Laguna on Feb. 22.

German said these would allow the team to cover more areas at costs less than those of traditional political rallies, where all the candidates converge on a stage.

German stressed that these assemblies, to be limited to one a week, would be "skin and bones" with a very minimal number of entertainers in tow.

Limited role for GMA

Team Unity, which has three opposition stalwarts on its roster, would be divided into four teams of three members each.

German said President Macapagal-Arroyo would limit her appearances in the campaign.

"She will just be there for the kickoff and the windup," he said.

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL VILLAR holds up his certificate of candidacy for senator at the Comelec office Monday. With him are his wife, Rep. Cynthia Villar, and children. Also showing their support are Sen. Pia Cayetano and Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, who is also running for senator.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Circus comes to town

From page A1

for her candidates under the so-called Team Unity ticket—a hybrid slate of allies and critics. *(See related story on Page A2.)*

After announcing that the administration's 12th senatorial slot had gone to Sultan Jamalul Kiram III of Sulu, Ms Arroyo had her audience roaring with laughter when she sang the campaign jingle of administration candidate Rep. Juan Miguel "Migs" Zubiri.

"Boom tarararat, boom taratarat, Zubiri, Zubiri, boom! boom! boom!" the President chortled.

Then she ticked off the names of all the candidates, starting with reelectionist Sen. Edgardo Angara whom she dubbed "Angara ng Pilipinas," an allusion to his campaign slogan, "Angara ng Buhay."

She described Rep. Pichay Jr. as "*gulay ng ating buhay* (veggie of our life)" and said teasingly in Filipino: "Let's plant him in the Senate."

Turning to her former chief of staff, Michael Defensor, Ms Arroyo called him, "Tol (Brother)," who she said could be relied upon to spearhead the administration's housing program and agrarian reform.

Memo ignored

"We entrust the future of the nation (to them)," she said, referring to the 12 candidates.

At the Comelec, cameramen crowded around to capture the moment of the Megastar and the Star for All Seasons in an embrace.

Not even a recent memo issued by Comelec officials prohibiting their staff from leaving their posts when politicians or celebrities come could stop employees from bolting out of their chairs and mobbing the visitors.

When a TV camera panned over them, some of the dozens of employees shrieked. Others ducked so that the camera would not catch them.

"They can't stop us if we want to see celebrities in person. Besides, it's our lunch break now," one female employee said.

She and the others looked giddy at having shaken the hands of Sharon and Vilma. Not a few posed for pictures with their bets.

Campaign season has begun

Even on the eighth floor of the Comelec building, employees took up strategic positions to get a clear view of the celebrities and the politicians.

Outside the Comelec building, it was as if the campaign season had begun as a sea of streamers and T-shirts of various candidates filled the streets.

Earlier, the streets throbbed with the drums of Ati-atihan bands as members of Team Unity heard Mass at the nearby Manila Cathedral.

Defensor's campaign posters were hung on nearly every lamppost in the area. His pink shirt-clad supporters held up posters bearing his "Walking 'Tol" slogan.

Defensor said there was no intention to upstage his fellow candidates.

Last to file

But in the end, it was clear the stars like Sharon and Vilma had commanded the greatest attention.

Among supporters of Senate President Manny Villar stood out television's teen idol Jennylyn Mercado, who has appeared in his ads.

Actor Richard Gomez, the only show biz star running for senator, came with his own celebrity team, including wife Lucy Torres, talent managers Douglas Quijano, Lolit Solis and Annabelle Rama, and basketball star Asi Taulava.

Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson and Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano of the United Opposition, along with the coalition's "guest candidate," Senate President Manuel Villar, were the last opposition candidates to file their certificates.

The three brought along their wives and children, and were accompanied by their political allies.

Wednesday Group

"We're running to fulfill the yet-to-be-fulfilled promise of President Macapagal-Arroyo to institute good governance," Cayetano said.

Lacson's supporters wore shirts with stickers reading, "Be not afraid." Lacson said this pertained to his crusade to fight corruption in government and crime in society.

Asked about the parting of ways of the members of the so-called "Wednesday Group" in the Senate—Villar, Arroyo, Pangilinan and Recto—Lacson said: "Hopefully, if and when we go back to the Senate, we will maintain (its) independence."

Cayetano said the Comelec now held the key to the country's future and he appealed to the agency not to tolerate cheating, "even if it collides with Malacañang in doing so."

Cayetano double

Cayetano said he also hoped the Comelec would disqualify the person who filed a certificate on Sunday using the name "Peter Cayetano" even if the latter's real name was Jose Pepito Cayetano.

Jose Pepito Cayetano, 41, of Davao City, is running under the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan.

"He was probably ordered to run by Jose Pidal," Cayetano said, referring to the alias allegedly used by First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo in opening bank accounts.

As of 8 o'clock last night, a total of 78 aspirants had filed their senatorial candidacies since the filing period began last month.

Sultan Kiram, a man of royal blood and the last administration bet to file his candidacy, traces his ancestry to Islam's Prophet Muhammad. He said he would be the voice of the Muslim Filipinos in the Senate.

Kiram, 68, a lawyer, was crowned the 33rd Sultan of Sulu in 1986.

Side by side with the VIPs in filing their candidacies were ordinary people who said they only wanted to serve.

"Being a poor man, I want to represent the poor," said Rafael Cabrera, 62, a sari-sari store owner from Bacoor, Cavite.

"My favorite book is Don Quixote, because even if only one people believed in him, he is not ashamed to fight for his beliefs," he said.

Cabrera said he would campaign in bus terminals and ports and that his slogans would be "To fight the unbeatable foe" and "To run where the brave dare not go"—part of the lyrics of the Impossible Dream song in the musical about Don Quixote.

There was one jobless candidate, Roque Benjamin of Cavite. *With reports from Jerome Aning and Dona Pazzibugan*

PRESIDENT ARROYO talks to Jose "Peping" Cojuangco during the first national convention of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino or Kampi at the Manila Hotel Monday.

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The Maximum Clearing Yields for each series of Eligible Bonds:

ISIN	Maturity Date	Coupon Rate	Maximum Yield	ISIN	Maturity Date	Coupon Rate	Maximum Yield	ISIN	Maturity Date	Coupon Rate	Maximum Yield
PIBD0307C099	3/11/2007	11.000%	3.20%	PIBD0508E494	5/5/2008	11.625%	4.70%	PIBD1009J120	10/14/2009	15.125%	5.45%
PIBD0707C225	3/23/2007	14.000%	3.25%	PIBD1008E056	5/28/2008	19.000%	4.75%	PIBD0509J569	10/28/2009	12.375%	5.45%
PIBD0507D442	4/11/2007	13.000%	3.30%	PIBD0308F121	6/2/2008	9.750%	4.75%	PIBD1009K137	11/25/2009	15.000%	5.45%
PIBD0707D233	4/19/2007	13.375%	3.35%	PIID0508F021	7/1/2008	10.375%	4.80%	PIBD1009L149	12/23/2009	14.875%	5.45%
PIBD0707E241	5/18/2007	13.875%	3.50%	PIBD0208G961	7/13/2008	8.375%	4.85%	PIBD0510A571	1/27/2010	11.500%	5.50%
PIBD0407E042	5/22/2007	10.625%	3.55%	PIBD0508G508	7/24/2008	9.875%	4.85%	PIBD1010B153	2/3/2010	14.750%	5.50%
PIBD1007E030	5/29/2007	13.875%	3.60%	PIBD0408G119	7/29/2008	11.000%	4.90%	PIBD1010C161	3/2/2010	14.625%	5.50%
PIBD0707F259	6/15/2007	13.500%	3.70%	PIBD0408H127	8/26/2008	11.750%	4.95%	PID1010CA170	3/30/2010	13.875%	5.50%
PIID0507F013	6/27/2007	12.375%	3.80%	PIBD1008H062	8/27/2008	20.000%	4.95%	PIBD0510D589	4/7/2010	11.500%	5.50%
PIBD0707G267	7/13/2007	14.000%	3.95%	PIBD0508J519	10/2/2008	10.250%	5.00%	PIBD0410D181	4/20/2010	6.500%	5.55%
PIID0307G045	7/16/2007	11.000%	3.95%	PIBD0408J134	10/21/2008	11.875%	5.05%	PIBD1010D188	4/27/2010	13.875%	5.55%
PIBD0507G458	7/25/2007	10.750%	4.05%	PIBD0708K322	11/15/2008	15.625%	5.10%	PIBD0710E348	5/8/2010	11.875%	5.55%
PIBD0707H275	8/3/2007	14.250%	4.10%	PIBD1008K077	11/26/2008	18.000%	5.15%	PIBD1010E196	5/25/2010	14.250%	5.55%
PIBD0407H058	8/14/2007	10.000%	4.15%	PIBD1008KT29	11/26/2008	17.800%	5.15%	PIBD1010F202	6/22/2010	14.125%	5.55%
PID0707HA286	8/24/2007	14.250%	4.15%	PIBD0409A140	1/13/2009	12.000%	5.25%	PIBD1010G210	7/20/2010	14.500%	5.55%
PIBD0707I292	9/21/2007	14.500%	4.20%	PIBD0509A520	1/15/2009	10.750%	5.25%	PIBD0510G595	7/21/2010	10.750%	5.55%
PIBD0507J464	10/24/2007	11.000%	4.25%	PIBD0309B132	2/17/2009	8.500%	5.25%	PIBD1010H228	8/10/2010	14.625%	5.55%
PIBD0407K063	11/13/2007	10.125%	4.30%	PIBD1009B084	2/25/2009	16.500%	5.25%	PIBD1010I236	9/1/2010	14.625%	5.60%
PIBD0307K109	11/18/2007	11.375%	4.30%	PIBD0509D536	4/8/2009	11.875%	5.30%	PIID0510H043	9/8/2010	10.625%	5.60%
PIBD1007K042	11/27/2007	22.875%	4.30%	PIBD0409E155	5/12/2009	10.750%	5.30%	PIBD0510I600	9/22/2010	10.875%	5.60%
PIBD1007KT12	11/27/2007	21.000%	4.30%	PIBD1009E090	5/27/2009	14.625%	5.35%	PIBD0510L615	12/1/2010	9.375%	5.60%
PIBD0707L305	12/14/2007	17.250%	4.30%	PIBD0309F143	6/15/2009	10.375%	5.35%	PIBD1010L261	12/21/2010	17.500%	5.65%
PIBD0408A072	1/8/2008	10.500%	4.45%	PIBD0509F543	6/17/2009	12.000%	5.35%	PIBD1011A278	1/18/2011	17.500%	5.65%
PIBD0508A470	1/23/2008	10.750%	4.50%	PIBD0409G162	7/14/2009	10.875%	5.35%	PIBD0711A354	1/22/2011	11.000%	5.65%
PIBD0708B313	2/8/2008	16.000%	4.50%	PIID0509G037	7/16/2009	11.750%	5.35%	PIBD0511C622	3/3/2011	8.500%	5.65%
PIBD0408B089	2/19/2008	10.875%	4.55%	PIBD0309G155	7/27/2009	8.750%	5.35%	PIBD0711D360	4/15/2011	12.000%	5.65%
PIBD0308C115	3/10/2008	10.500%	4.55%	PIBD0409H170	8/4/2009	10.500%	5.40%	PIBD0511F638	6/22/2011	10.625%	5.70%
PIBD0408D094	4/1/2008	11.375%	4.60%	PIBD0509H550	8/12/2009	11.875%	5.40%	PIBD0711G376	7/22/2011	12.000%	5.70%
PIBD0208D946	4/6/2008	6.500%	4.65%	PIBD1009I103	9/2/2009	15.000%	5.40%	PIBD1011J288	10/11/2011	16.500%	5.70%
PIBD0208E954	5/4/2008	6.500%	4.70%	PIB1009IA118	9/23/2009	15.500%	5.40%	PIBD0511J642	10/19/2011	7.250%	5.75%
								PIID0511L054	12/6/2011	5.875%	5.75%

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Will 'Boom Tarat Tarat' win votes for politicos?

From page A1

else being equal, political jingles might spell the difference for outgoing Congressmen Juan Miguel "Amigo" Zubiri and Francis "Chiz" Escudero and former lawmaker Michael "Tol" Defensor.

Escudero, who is running under the United Opposition banner, said he chose "Sugod," a song popularized by the rock band Sandwich, for its "catchy tune that appeals to the younger crowd."

He said that against his "Sugod," fellow aspirants Defensor and Zubiri had chosen the tune "Para Sa'yo" of boxing icon Manny Pacquiao and comedian Willie Revillame's novelty song, "Boom Tarat Tarat."

"This is a small world (so we know each other's jingles)," Escudero said in an interview yesterday. "I think it will be a question of our ability to spread (the jingles) and let them be heard all around the country."

To the Sorsogon lawmaker, Defensor and Zubiri are familiar adversaries. Both belonged to the Spice Boys—a group of young opposition congressmen during the Estrada administration.

Available as ring tones

Escudero, on the other hand, was part of its counterpart Bright Boys, which was formed to engage Defensor and company in debates on proposed Charter amendments.

The Bright and Spice Boys have grown older, and their arena has become bigger.

At 37, Escudero still banks on the youth vote to land him a seat in the Senate. His "Sugod" jingle is expected to be available for downloading on his website "www.chizescudero.com" beginning today, the start of the campaign period.

Versions of the jingle will be available as cell phone ring tones or played on radio and television as paid advertisements. Escudero promised to abide by the legal prescription of only 120 minutes of ads on TV and 180 minutes of ads on radio throughout the campaign period.

Can reach millions

Escudero said his website could reach between 500,000 and two million people.

The website is set to hold at 9 a.m. today a one-time, "online press conference" between the candidate and reporters here and abroad.

The chat room provided by www.yehey.com will also focus on absentee voters in the United States, the Middle East and Hong Kong, according to Malou Borabo, who designed the website.

"(The website) basically shows the relatively young orientation of our campaign," Escudero said. "We are taking advantage of existing and developing technologies."

Beyond the attraction of the Internet campaign, Escudero insisted that victory or defeat would still depend on whether a candidate could "provide inspiration to our people and lead by example."

ALL IN THE FAMILY (the ex, present and future of Philippine politics)

ZAMBALES Gov. Vic Magsaysay shows off his certificate of candidacy. He was accompanied to the Comelec by his family including his cousin, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. (left).
EDWIN BACASMAS

PRESIDENT MACAPAGA
Secretary Ronaldo Puno a

MIKE DEFEN

MIKE Defensor with wife Julie, daughter Mikee and father, Quezon City Rep. Mat Defensor, at the Comelec.
EDWIN BACASMAS

INDEPENDENT senatorial candidate actor Richard Gomez leaves the Comelec office with wife Lucy Torres after filing his certificate of candidacy.
REM ZAMORA

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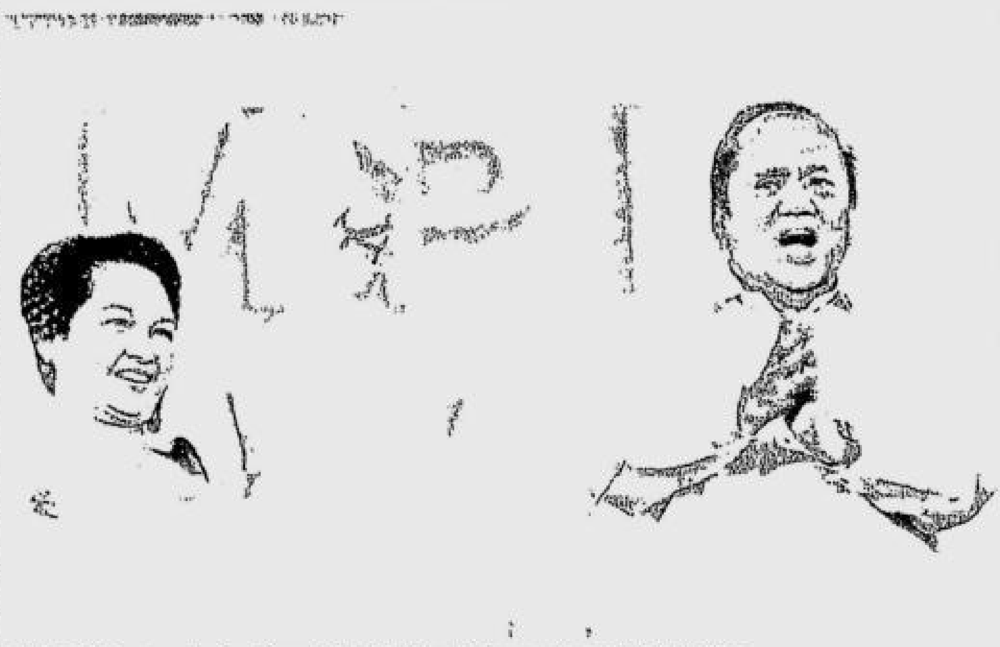
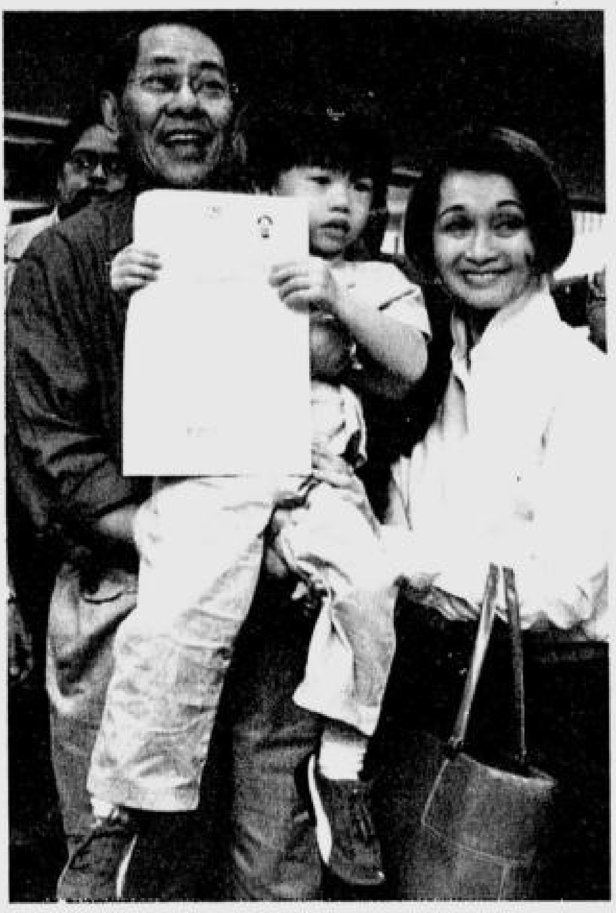


-ARROYO attends the Kampi 1st National Convention with Interior
nd Rep. Luis Villafuerte, right, at the Manila Hotel. LYN RILLON



SEN. EDGARDO Angara and wife, Gloria, hold up their grandson, Manolo, who is showing his *lolo*'s certificate of candidacy outside the Comelec office. EDWIN BACASMAS

OPPOSITION Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano makes his bid for the Senate official. He is flanked by, from left, Sen. Fred Lim, Rep. Joel Villanueva, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, wife Lani Cayetano and sister Sen. Pia Cayetano. EDWIN BACASMAS

No photo-ops with Erap ...

From page A1

ed" to or relayed through members of his family who are also in politics because "there can be no substitute for Erap's experience and charisma."

Citing an alleged communist plot to assassinate Estrada, the Philippine National Police (PNP) has limited since Feb. 6 his visitors to members of his immediate family and to only one lawyer per visit.

In addition, all the cell phones of Estrada have been confiscated, according to Rodriquez.

He said these measures, which were not applied to Estrada during the 2004 presidential election, showed that "this administration just wants to weaken the opposition by making Erap incommunicado."

Note, for instance, that the PNP began imposing the new restrictions without any stated reason, Rodriguez said.

The Estrada camp aired these complaints to the press on Wednesday, and only on the following day did Malacañang, through National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, speak of an alleged communist slay plot against the 69-year-old opposition leader, Rodriguez said.

Security for Estrada was so tight last week that even Senate President Manuel Villar was barred from entering the Tanay rest house.

Get permit first

But visitors, including candidates in the May elections, can now visit Estrada, the PNP said yesterday.

But only if the visitors could get permission from the PNP head, said Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, the PNP spokesperson.

"To avoid any inconvenience, we advice political personalities and other visitors to course their request (to see Estrada) through the PSPO (Police Security Protection Office)," Pagdilao told reporters yesterday.

Once a request is received by the PSPO, Pagdilao said it would depend on PNP Director General Oscar Calderon whether or not to grant the request.

The PSPO is the unit that is assigned to guard Estrada in Tanay.

"It was a desperate move to prevent or delay us from completing our senatorial slate (in time for the deadline for the filing of the candidacies yesterday)," Rodriguez said of the restrictions.

The United Opposition was able to complete its senatorial slate on Sunday.

"But where it has succeeded is (in the fact that) we still don't have a clear campaign strategy because we have not yet really consulted with President Estrada," Rodriguez said.

An official of the communist-led National Democratic Front belied the allegation of Gonzales that the New People's Army was planning to assassinate President Macapagal-Arroyo, Estrada, and top Malacañang and military officials.

Fidel V. Agcaoili, chair of the NDF-Human Rights Committee, said in an e-mail from Utrecht, the Netherlands, that the "malicious intent of Gonzales is to ... prevent Estrada from effectively helping opposition candidates in the forthcoming elections."

Estrada's legal team in his five-year-old plunder trial formally asked the Sandiganbayan antigraft court to summon Gonzales—even to a closed-door hearing—for "clarification" regarding the "new, unprecedented restrictions."

"Why is the principal accused being isolated?" wondered lawyer Rene Saguisag in an urgent motion.

"We need to know the people behind this new outlandish and unconstitutional restrictions and why the same are being imposed. The usual suspect is a supposedly nutty official, which we cannot believe, and he should be heard here," Saguisag said.

The motion said Estrada needed to be "clarified whether the denial of the basic human and constitutional right to confer with counsel, and meet people and express his views, may be sanctioned by the prosecution, this court, and the administration."

With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Choosing right

EDITORIAL

FINALLY, THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE UNITED Opposition have completed their senatorial tickets, and everything is set for the grand electoral battle ahead. It must come as a relief to the more intelligent, discerning voters that the two groups have not yielded to the temptation to pack their tickets with many show biz and sports celebrities whose only asset is their popularity.

Voters have to be reminded that senators are among the most powerful elective officials of the country and that they perform very important tasks. The Senate has been a breeding ground of presidents, and one of the senators who will be elected this year may run for president in 2010. It is thus imperative that the voters choose the 12 best and brightest, the most competent and most honorable and those with proven dedication to the country.

The Senate had its historical origins in the Roman Senate, the main governing council of both the Roman Republic and the empire. "Senate" comes from the Latin *senex*, meaning old man or elder. Senators from the 2nd century AD onwards were called *viri clarissimi* (very distinguished men). Not just any celebrity could become a Roman senator.

The Senate had considerable clout in Roman politics. It sent and received ambassadors and appointed officials to manage public lands. It conducted wars and appropriated public funds. It authorized the city's chief magistrates, the consuls, to nominate a dictator during a state of emergency.

The United States adopted the concept of the Roman Senate and provided for the election of two senators from each state for a six-year term. In the first US Senate, the senators were divided into three classes by lot, with the first class serving a two-year term; the second, four years; and the third, six years. The framers of the US Constitution hoped that the biennial elections would bring stability to the Senate and the other branches of the government.

The Senate is the other half of the US Congress (the other one is the House of Representatives) which passes laws and resolutions. The Senate has the sole power to try impeachment cases. It ratifies treaties entered into by the president and gives its advice and consent to the appointments of ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, justices of the Supreme Court and all other officers.

The Philippines basically adopted the concept of the US Senate. The Philippine Legislature, composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives, was created under the Jones Law passed in 1916. The Legislature was succeeded in 1935 by the National Assembly upon the inauguration of the Philippine Commonwealth. President Ferdinand E. Marcos abolished Congress in 1972 when he declared martial law, but the new regime installed by the Edsa Revolution in 1986 restored the bicameral Congress.

The Senate was a gathering of the best and the brightest, the wisest, most competent politicians and legislators of the country during the Commonwealth and pre-martial law eras. Men and women who distinguished themselves in law, economics, business, foreign service, education, science and the other professions have graced its halls. People like Quezon, Osmeña, Roxas, Tañada, Osias, Diokno, Sumulong, Tolentino, Puyat, Salonga and Aquino contributed their expertise in the drafting of the nation's laws.

The Senate, home of orators and debaters, has been performing effectively its role in the system of checks and balances in our government by exposing and checking abuses in the exercise of executive power.

It was in 1992 that show-biz and sports celebrities began their entry into the halls of the Senate. Most of them won largely because of their popularity and name recall. Some of them quickly became members of the "*comite de silencio*" who did not contribute anything to the debates and discussions in what is basically a "speaking club." After all, the Senate is part of a parliament, a word which comes from *parlement*, which in turn comes from *parler*, French for to talk.

If we have discussed the historical background of the Senate at length, it is because we want to impress upon the voters who will soon make their choices the importance of choosing the right people to be our senators in the next six years. Voters need not limit their choices to the two principal tickets. Other groups may have better candidates to offer. The nation deserves nothing but the best people to sit in the august hall of the Senate.

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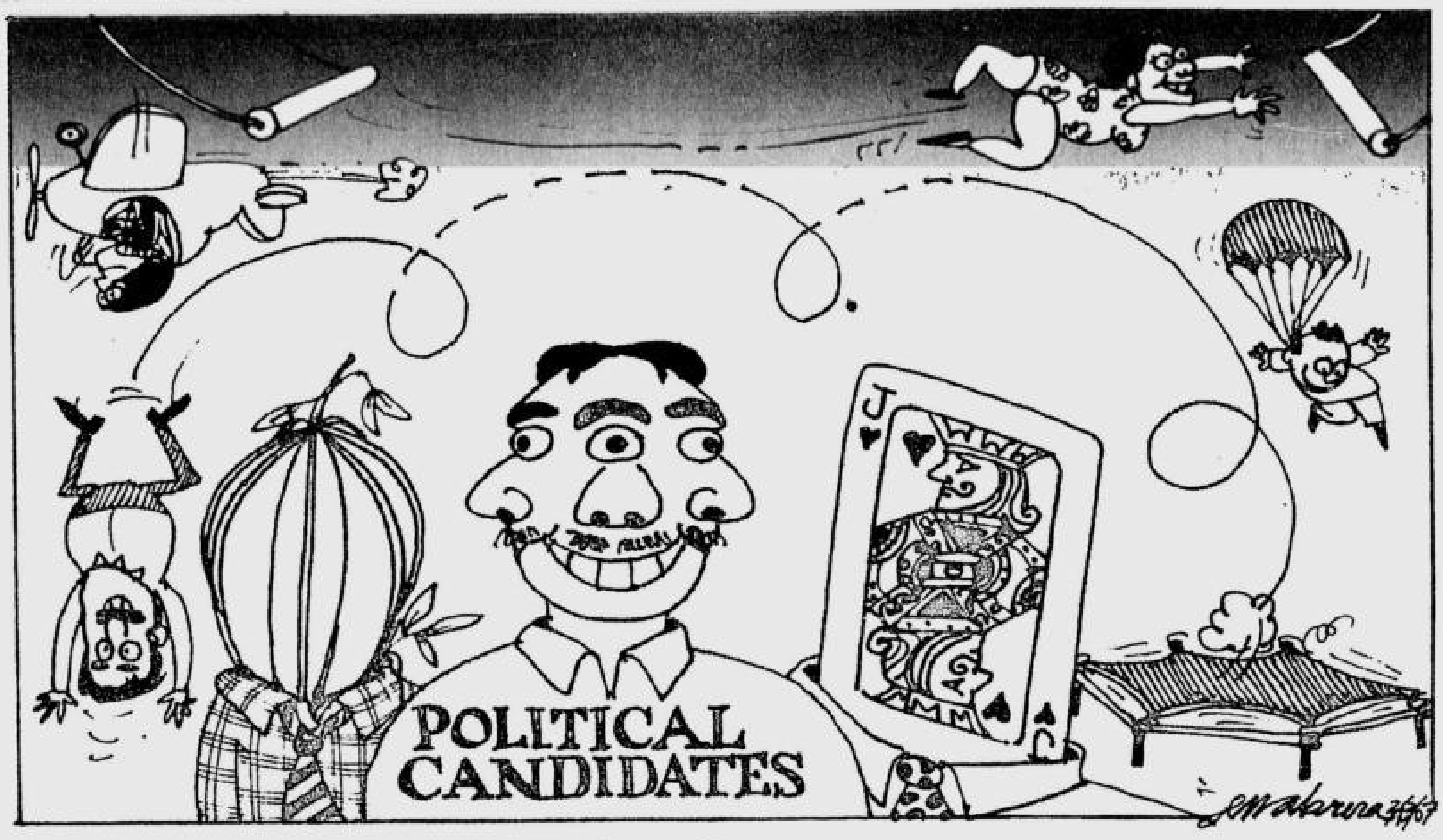

A tale of 12 cities

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IS ANYONE KEEPING TRACK OF BILLS CREATING new cities that jack-knifed their way through Congress before it adjourned?

In 1991, we had 60 cities, many of dubious viability. By 2003, the number almost doubled to 114. After Taguig, Santa Rosa and Meycauayan joined the club, the total rose to 117. This "strained the national government's ability to finance such local government units," the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank noted. But "the small size of LGUs prevent them from generating their own resources."

This Congress approved 12 more "city candidates": Bogo and Carcar (Cebu); Baybay (Leyte); Catbalogan (Samar); Lamitan (Basilan); Tandag (Surigao del Sur); Batac (Ilocos Norte); Bayugan (Agusan del Sur); Cabadbaran (Agusan del Norte) and Borongan (Eastern Samar).

These 12 will slice bigger internal revenue allotments (IRAs), chortled Sen. Alfredo Lim. "If these municipalities cannot even manage to meet the basic income requirement (set by RA 9009) how can they be expected to perform and deliver as cities?" the League of Cities of the Philippines snapped back. "The vested interests of a few are the only ingredients needed to derail a rational and sensible law."

The 12 got this far because Congress watered down RA 9009's criteria for minimum economic tools. The entrance fee to "the club" rose from P20 million to P100 million in, mark this well, locally-generated income.

Taguig, Santa Rosa and Meycauayan meet standards on generating local taxes without a whimper, thereby creating a larger economic pie. The 12 will help themselves from the common IRA larder. But that extra will be dunned from the IRAs of others: financially strapped Muslim provinces or four-and fifth-class towns. This is a "beggar your neighbor" policy.

IRAs are not a permanent crutch, a UN study points out. They're to give elbow room for LGUs to flex their local revenue-collecting muscles.

But IRAs proved addictive and the reverse happened. IRAs used to cover half of local budgets. Today, they account for 63 centavos of every budgeted peso.

"Unconditional grants" invariably sap accountability. And IRAs are not linked to performance. Thus, the share of locally raised taxes has shriveled, from 31 centavos out of every peso in the mid-1980s to only 20 centavos today. And it is still shrinking.

Few shell cities become "engines of growth." Instead, they remain hooked on IRAs and slurp from national pork barrels. Already, these cities are hard-pressed to provide residents with even basic services, since they're loath to tax idle land and raise levies from business, etc. Officials curry favor from voters by subsidizing water, etc.

Population, meanwhile, ratchets the pressure. Migrants fleeing rural penury flood into their slums. In 2005, 6 out of every 10 Filipinos lived in urban sprawl. By 2030, urban residents could crest at 85 million.

Mumbling "equal protection of law" Congress exempted the 12 from complying with RA 9009's criteria for high performance. It gutted standards down to mediocrity. Is this just the election year virus? Or is it a deeper national canker?

Do we meet the demand for high performance by lowering hurdles instead? A shortage in classrooms was "solved" by juggling statistics on class sizes. In National Elementary Achievement Tests, poor performance led to scaling the passing mark down to 50 percent, then doling a "bonus" of 60 points. "This meant the criterion passing score was 37.5 percent," Philippine Human Development Report notes. "Whom are we kidding? Self-delusion sells short the efforts of other cities that, by dint of hard work and performance of its officials and citizens, are emerging as 'development path-blazers.'"

For their packages of best governance practices, Bacolod, Naga and Iloilo are cited in the latest Asian Development Bank study of "urbanization and stability" in 12 Asian countries. Among "key lessons" these three cities offer, the ADB cites the following:

"Strict enforcement of the rule of law is common to the three cities." (No vigilantes for summary execution, as in Davao and Cebu.)

"All three cities underscore the active role of civil society in undertaking numerous development projects with local governments. (They systematically used) policy instruments, such as the Local Government Code and city ordinances, to open avenues not only for citizen participation but also for encouraging private sector development."

Naga City's "Citizens Charter" increased transparency and accountability of government. Procurement bids are publicized and officials respond, instead of ignoring, questions from citizens. Local revenues increased 12 times. Bacolod whittled down its IRA dependence by increasing its tax base. Infant and maternal mortality are down. And so is the crime rate. And the Iloilo Metropolitan Development Council, through patient consultative efforts over a decade, put in place a coherent development plan.

Reforms were possible through vision and commitment of local chief executives. But they were not Lone Ranger-type mayors or governors. "Citizens empowerment were part of the agenda of the three city governments."

Running a city is more than just having IRAs to prop up a "city" shingle. "Cities are changing the social fabric and culture of nations," the ADB study notes. "It is unstoppable and changing people's lives… It has elements of unpredictability and chaos."

To cope with those changes requires more than our wont for self-delusion.

(E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

Footnote to a farce

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I NEVER GOT TO COMMENT ON IT LAST week, what with one thing and another happening. But it's too important to let pass.

That was the House of Representatives' ethics and privileges committee's decision to suspend Alan Peter Cayetano for 45 days. The vote, to nobody's surprise, was 35-3-1. The lone abstention came from Butz Aquino who probably said it best: "I don't want to have a part in this kangaroo court."

Cayetano was suspended for accusing Mike Arroyo, also called the First Gentleman (well, we also call Raul Gonzalez justice secretary, Norberto Gonzales national security adviser, and Ronaldo Puno and Benjamin Abalos guardians of clean elections) of harboring deposits in a bank in Munich.

The only good in this is that it will probably catapult Cayetano upward in the voting charts. Who knows? Maybe it might even make him No. 1 when the smoke clears in May, assuming this country is able to thwart the advance of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, as I wrote about yesterday. Cayetano's suspension has yet to be approved by Congress in plenary session. What can I say? I most ardently hope it does, if only to give Cayetano more free advertisement than GMA's expensive PCSO ads, which now litter the NBA games on Basketball TV like debris after a super storm, do for the administration candidates. The equation is simple: Jose Pidal's enemy is Juan de la Cruz's friend. I can only plead earnestly with our congressmen: Please oppress Cayetano some more.

That is the only good thing about it. Everything else stinks.

To begin with, the ethics and privileges committee is so only in that Mike Arroyo represents gentleness, first or last, and Raul Gonzalez dispenses justice, legal or poetic. Look at the creatures that infest it and ask yourself if most of them have even heard of the word "ethics," much less grasped its meaning. You can only be certain they have heard of the word "privileges," clinging as they do to them with all their might.

While at this, the entire premise of Mike Arroyo's suit against 43 journalists (last I looked) is that he is not a public official, he is an ordinary citizen. Therefore journalists may not simply claim good faith when they attack him, they must pay for the trespass in cash or kind. Well, if he is an ordinary citizen, why has the House ethics committee moved heaven and hell to try to remove one of their own from their ranks as though he were an absolute contamination because he dared raise as a matter of fundamental national interest the possibility he is not just a crook but a most unpatriotic one? If I recall right, a Muslim congresswoman attacked an ordinary citizen, in the form of a representative of a catering outfit, with a knife in the very premises of the Batasan for inadvertently contaminating her soup with bits of pork, and she never met with any sanction.

Which brings us to Cayetano's "crime." Did he make a mistake in identifying the deposit? Probably. Does he have the right to get a waiver from the First Gentleman, one that applies to all possible deposits abroad? Absolutely. It's not just he who has the right, the entire Filipino nation does. Ping Lacson did issue such a waiver when he was on the hot seat, and, as he pointed out to me in a text message last week, even went on to file a couple of bills that would make such a blanket waiver compulsory. The bills went unheeded but he vows to revive them if he gets back to the Senate.

At the very least, Cayetano's mistake is an honest one. At the very most, his motivation is a laudable one. Contrast this with a humongous crime that remains unpunished to this day. That is an incumbent president calling up a Comelec commissioner right in the middle of canvassing and asking to win by a million votes over a nearest rival. That mistake is a thoroughly dishonest one, having, as it does, the gravest consequences and its perpetrator having, as she did, full knowledge and full consent, which are, if I remember my catechism right, the requirements for mortal sin. And its motivation sucks, its perpetrator simply wanting power at any cost. Yet Congress' ethics committee never ruled to suspend its perpetrator from power, it promoted her to dictator.

But in the end the worst thing about the fate Cayetano has met in the hands of his inferiors (they are by no means his peers) is that they make a farce of elections. Frankly, I don't know why we're going ape about the May elections. Frankly, I don't know why we're betting feverishly on the candidates like the loud and drunken crowd in off-track betting stations. We already have the killings and the cheating that are making a mockery of elections. But added to that, you can get voted into office and lose it anyway on various ruses by a corrupt and ruthless administration.

We've already seen the attempted ouster of Jojo Binay as mayor of Makati and the actual ouster of Pasay City Mayor Pewee Trinidad and other elected public officials. We've already seen the attempted ouster of Legaspi Mayor Noel Rosal, with fake ballot boxes suddenly materializing in the Comelec premises and the Comelec ruling that a rival candidate actually won the vote. And now we see a representative suspended by Congress for a crime against the people, the people defined as Mike Arroyo. Different tactics, same result. In this country, it's not enough to be voted by the voters to hold office. You have to be voted as well by the DILG, Comelec, Congress, and whoever they'll think of next.

You don't get murdered or cheated in the polls, you'll get massacred afterward.

Cayetano's fate in the hands of his colleagues razes down the entire concept of an elected official. But then why expect them to appreciate the concept of an elected official? Their big boss is not.

Arroyo's and Recto's reasoning

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE ADMINISTRATION AND OPPOSITION HAVE completed their senatorial slates. But the line-ups remain as confusing as ever, with politicians who were once instrumental in ousting former President Joseph Estrada joining his coalition, while those who had been fiercely loyal to him are now running under the administration ticket. Senate President Manuel Villar, who rushed the Erap impeachment petition to the Senate in December 1999 when he saw that the needed number of signatures had been obtained, is a guest candidate of the Erap camp, while Joker Arroyo, who led the prosecution of Erap, chose to return to the Arroyo camp where he first won a Senate seat. Former Senators Teresa Oreta and Vicente Sotto, who led the fight against opening the second envelope, have landed in the GMA camp, while their allies, John Osmeña and Nikki Coseteng, remain with the Erap camp. On the other hand, Sen. Edgardo Angara, who remained faithful to Estrada to the end, is now with GMA.

* * *

Stars rained on the Comelec over the past few days as movie personalities or those married or related to them hurried to beat the deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy, dazzling the poll body's personnel. Name recall was the major rule for candidates such as Gov. Vic Magsaysay of Zambales, Sonia Roco and military renegade Antonio Trillanes. There were tired old faces such as Chavit Singson and Osmeña, as well as tired-looking campaigners like Ernesto Maceda. But I note a few fresh faces, too. One of them is Leyte Gov. Jericho Petilla, one of the young new stars in local governments.

* * *

With the decision of Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto to join the administration coalition, the fight has become pretty even, although some pundits are saying that the opposition has a decided edge due to the President's low ratings. But as in the 2004 presidential election, which was a race between a very popular candidate and someone who lagged in the popularity polls, what would tilt the race for its candidates are the administration's projects in the countryside, the Lakas machinery and more logistics. It's also expected that people will pick freely from the various camps.

* * *

What should worry the Arroyo coalition is the rift among the forces supporting GMA, notably in the two vote-rich provinces of Bulacan and Cebu. Every president has had this problem in the mid-term elections, but GMA's problem appears to be more serious. She should have attended to this long ago, but she chose to ignore it on account of her divide-and-rule strategy. The disunity among her allies, if unresolved, could have a telling effect on the election results.

* * *

Arroyo and Recto, in their full-page ad explaining why they chose to run again with the GMA group, cited two main reasons. One is the opposition's steadfast refusal to defend the Constitution when it was under threat from military adventures and to "recognize the constitutional succession of the vice president." It will be recalled that many who did not exactly like GMA refused to side with the opposition mainly because it was unclear in its support for Vice President Noli de Castro in the event of her ouster. To many, this looked like a formula for political chaos. Arroyo and Recto, who are with De Castro in the Wednesday Group, underscored this fact.

They also stress that the opposition has failed to offer a sensible alternative but only kept pushing for her ouster or impeachment. By contrast, the economy has become better under GMA. In view of the opposition's lack of program of government, the two senators favor "letting the administration complete the work it is doing," even as they promise "a close watch on anything else it may attempt."

Fair enough. The two have captured a sentiment shared by many citizens, especially the business sector which is benefiting from the economic reforms. I suspect they're going to give her the allies she needs in the Senate to do that.

* * *

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap drew bipartisan support, which is rare in Congress, for his confirmation last week, with the legislators recognizing his efforts to raise productivity and incomes of farmers and fishermen, while delivering cheaper foodstuff to the people. We invited Yap last Sunday to guest on our dzRH program and what impressed us most is that he's not given to pushing for very ambitious programs and projects, but for workable and cheaper ones. For instance, he noted that while *galunggong* costs P90 to P120 a kilo in Metro Manila, in Mindoro it sells for only P15 a kilo because of the lack of cold storage facilities which forces fishermen to grab the first middleman's offer. This explains why coastal fishermen are among the poorest. Yap has signed agreements with some Chinese groups to provide small mobile ice plants and transport facilities to municipal fishery cooperatives and associations, apart from the rehabilitation of the giant Navotas Fish Port.

* * *

Philippine fruits are making headway abroad, thanks to more aggressive marketing. For instance, one million mango farmers produce 950,000 metric tons a year, but the demand for mangoes abroad is three times that number, as China and Japan open their doors to it. In Japan, Philippine banana imports are second only to Ecuador's. Among the exporting firms is Davao-based Sumitomo Fruits, managed by a Filipino named Paul Cuyegkeng, which brings into Japan about P4 billion worth of bananas yearly.

In the meantime, China's Guangzhou Jiangnan Fruit and Vegetable Market Development Co., Ltd., where 80 percent of fresh fruits are traded with an annual turnover of more than $1 billion, has granted access to our fruits. In last November's flower exposition in Jiangnan, the RP delegation got an initial P200 million in orders. A pittance still for the 1.2 billion Chinese market, but progress nonetheless.

Wherever the winds blow

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THAT RE-ELECTIONIST SENATORS JOKER ARroyo and Ralph Recto felt constrained to explain their joining the senatorial ticket of the administration says much about the confused political situation we face today.

The two, but especially Joker, are not exactly beloved of Malacañang, and have been trying of late to strike independent, if not critical, poses vis-à-vis President Macapagal-Arroyo. I cannot for the life of me picture how Arroyo and Recto could abide the company of, much less campaign alongside, men like Prospero Pichay and Juan Miguel Zubiri who tried their best to railroad Arroyo and Recto out of a job and a title.

And besides, how could such pro-Cha-cha stalwarts, fervent believers in a unicameral system, convince voters they are fit to sit in the Senate which in previous months they had described as an "obstructionist" and "unnecessary" body? So are they asking for our votes so they can preside over the Senate's surrender?

Indeed, when I heard some of the names in the line-up—Pichay and Zubiri, but also Ed Angara, Mike Defensor, Vic Magsaysay, Tito Sotto and especially Chavit Singson—it struck me that the listing sounded more like a rogues' gallery than a roll-call of statesmen. What is the administration's game plan? From their line-up it seems they will rely on local powers-that-be to strong-arm the vote their way.

If this is so, won't Joker and Ralph be complicit in the possible illicit generation of votes? I understand there are personal as well as financial reasons behind the duo's decision. But while their supporters might understand their situation, they might not be so sympathetic if they are shown to have participated in, or even just tolerated, cheating on a major scale.

* * *

STILL, on the other side of the divide, amity and friendship also seems to be in short supply. Two of Joker and Ralph's allies in the "Wednesday Group" have joined as guest candidates the United Opposition line-up. But even now, one of them, Sen. Francis Pangilinan, sounds like he would rather keep a safe distance between himself and the other personalities in the UNO slate.

Early on, a rabid Erap and FPJ supporter, actor Rez Cortez, stated firmly that they are "saying No to Mr. Noted," in reference to Pangilinan's terse reply to every objection that lawyers of Fernando Poe Jr. raised during the 2004 canvassing. But Kiko himself has already said he will conduct his campaign as an "independent," saying he "cannot stomach working with political turncoats" in both administration and opposition line-ups.

The trouble is that by joining the UNO slate, Kiko could be construed as something of a turncoat himself, since he finds himself allied with politicians he had opposed in the past. The fact is, however, that political winds blow in many directions, and what may have seemed right and politic one day may be seen as despicable the next. An "independent" like Pangilinan must prove that however and wherever the winds blow him, he has kept his basic principles and ethics intact.

* * *

TEN PESOS. Ten pesos a day is all it takes to feed a malnourished child in this country, and yet, as figures released by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute reveal, 3 out of every 10 children, of ages 5 and below, suffer from chronic malnutrition. These children are underweight, underheight and experience stunted growth. Studies also show that poor nutrition in early childhood often results in impaired mental ability.

Last Saturday, a caravan wound its way around the metropolis to create greater public awareness about the problem of malnutrition and generate funds for "Hapag-Asa," the flagship project of the Pondo ng Pinoy Community Foundation that seeks to make a dent on the scope of malnutrition.

Together with the Assisi Development Foundation, Pondo ng Pinoy through Hapag-Asa hopes to "graduate" thousands of children from the ranks of the malnourished. Since its launching in late 2005, Hapag-Asa has successfully fed some 6,000 children back to health, and currently enrolls 65,000 children in 37 dioceses nationwide.

And yet, as the organizers themselves admit, the numbers constitute but a drop in the bucket, considering the project's goal of freeing 120,000 children from the deadly grip of malnutrition and its health-related complications by the year's end, and the millions of Filipino children now experiencing hunger on a daily basis.

A Hapag-Asa program entails feeding 100 malnourished children, five days a week, usually in a parish, school or even barangay hall. Pondo ng Pinoy covers the P10 daily cost of feeding a child, while other cooperating groups conduct health education for parents, usually mothers, spiritual formation and livelihood training.

The program is now being implemented in the 12 member-dioceses of Pondo ng Pinoy: Manila, Kalookan, Pasig, Novaliches, Cubao, Daet, Parañaque, San Pablo, Antipolo, Imus, Puerto Princesa and Malolos. Another 21,000 children are being served by the program in 25 dioceses which are not part of Pondo ng Pinoy. Hapag-Asa has also been adopted by NGOs, foundations and local government units which have pledged to feed more than 70,000 children by this year.

Pondo ng Pinoy raises money for its projects by involving all members of the Catholic faithful who are asked to donate their petty change by dropping coins into cans located in churches, schools and other strategic places. The goal, Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales has said, is to get everyone involved in making this world a better place by forming the habit of donating an amount, no matter how small, to good causes. And you can't get a better ROI than a child's survival for a mere P10 a day!

How will tomorrow's scientists learn?

WORLD VIEW

Helga Nowotny

I WAS RECENTLY INVITED TO SPEAK AT science-related meetings on two consecutive days in different places in Europe. One was the official opening of a network of science centers in Vienna, linking decentralized activities in an interactive exhibition that tour Austria. The other was the Science Festival of Genoa, Italy, a young and hugely successful event with exhibitions and high-profile speakers throughout the ancient town.

What struck me on both occasions was the sustained, and evidently successful, attempt to reach out to the two target groups upon whom the future of science and technology will depend. The first group is teenagers, who are deeply interested in all the new technologies and gadgets that surround them. They have made these technologies an integral part of their lives, but their relationship to science has remained distant. The other target audience consists of younger children, whose openness and inborn curiosity have not yet been stifled by formal schooling.

The success of Europe's newly established science centers and festivals in reaching their potential audiences reflects their invention of a new way of teaching and learning. They have succeeded in setting up a largely informal learning environment, focusing mainly on truly interactive learning. By soliciting questions from children that have little place in the formal educational system, the audience is led to experience the research process, which often begins precisely by asking the right kind of question.

Although we will need more such informal learning environments in the future, politicians and the public have hardly noticed. Gone are the Utopian dreams of the 1970s, when there were visions of life-long learning and paid leaves of absence to pursue topics that might be useful for further professional advancement—or might also include the sheer luxury of studying ancient Greek or Assyrian art.

But the need for some kind of continuous learning has become even more obvious today, in a world driven by the forces of globalization. The relentless competition for talent and skills is being underscored daily by the increases in research and development investment in China and India, whose growing middle classes are only too keen to seek better educational opportunities for their children. Talent is now recognized as a scarce commodity that needs to be nurtured for a worldwide market of skills and competencies. "The battle for brain power," as The Economist recently put it, has begun.

It is fairly safe to predict that learning in a knowledge-intensive society will continue at a heightened pace, both at the workplace and outside of it. It will be facilitated through Web-based social software, through wikis, blogs, and similar developments as much as through new, "open source" business models.

These are informal structures, even if they have owners and access to them is regulated. The corporate world—indeed, the formal workplace more generally—can no longer be strictly separated from the informal world in which work and leisure have become blurred. Just as formal schooling needs to become better integrated with the informal learning environments to which our children are exposed in multiple ways, formal and informal learning must mesh in a life-long process.

Science and technology have an enormous stake in this development, and worldwide competition for the best brains is already acutely felt in European universities. This year's Nobel Prizes highlighted once more that the research climate in the United States continues to be more conducive to scientific excellence compared to what Europe has to offer. Initiatives aimed at fostering scientific excellence in Europe, like one recently launched in Germany that officially defined three universities, all in the southern part of the country, as "excellent" (qualifying them for extra funding), seek to make universities more attractive and thus more competitive.

While such efforts certainly point in the right direction, the research-friendliness and innovativeness of the wider societal environment, particularly practices of informal learning and opportunities to follow one's curiosity, also matter. When, beginning in the 19th century, book publishing became not only a lucrative business but also made books increasingly affordable to many more households, the sources of learning in society exploded. Indeed, the societal wealth created through the Industrial Revolution is partly due to this new diffusion of knowledge and skills.

Seeing the excitement that can be generated in young people through events like science festivals and networks of science centers gives rise to cautious optimism—provided we seize the diversity of opportunities that informal learning offers. Informal learning implies a messy, unruly and potentially subversive process. But it also promises to nurture the creative ferment in which great science thrives. *—Project Syndicate*

Helga Nowotny is vice chair of the European Research Council and fellow at the Wissenschaftszentrum, Vienna.

Lost art

YOUNG BLOOD

Jon Jose C. Balintona

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IF TRADITION WERE TO BE OBSERVED, WE SHOULD BE seeing the male of the species hurrying to the nearest flower shop chocolate store now with Valentine's Day fast approaching. We should also catch some of them in the corners of their classrooms, the steps of staircases, or in the silent bounds of the restrooms, lost in thought and struggling to compose the perfect love letter. Others would be practicing the guitar chords of the more popular love songs until their fingers bleed.

In the meantime, the girls will be sitting quietly in their room, combing their hair and awaiting the arrival of their "Prince Charming."

Over the years, however, the number of struggling balladeers, hopeful poets and roses-and-chocolates carrying men has dwindled. Women still sit quietly in their rooms, combing their hair, but this time they have a whole array of creams and cosmetics to apply their faces as they wait for the "perfect guys" to ask them out.

All of a sudden, courtship seems to have become a lost art.

For the male, winning a girl's heart has become a contest among those who have the latest model cell phones, the fastest cars, or the trendiest hairstyles. For the female, the quest for a date is a fashion show of skimpy dresses, plunging necklines, spaghetti straps, micro-mini skirts, tons of facial powder and pungent perfumes. The practice of asking parents for permission to go out on a date has been bypassed by text messaging and secret rendezvous with friends.

Maybe I am wrong to think that courtship is on the brink of extinction. Maybe today's pop culture has just re-packaged the whole concept and turned it into a flashy show of fancy wares, scandalous dresses and forwarded text messages.

The Internet has a central role in this new-age type of courtship. ASL, anyone? Eye-ball? SOP? SOT? View my webcam? Friendster? Can I tag you? Why send roses when you can send a smiley?

It is quite alarming to see a bunch of girls and boys going out on a drinking binge and ending up as "special friends" the following day. It is shocking to learn how quickly a girl says yes to a guy whose face is framed by the screen of a mobile phone.

Of course, there are still a few guys who stick to the old routine of picking up the girls for dinner dates, meeting their parents and giving chocolates and flowers. But their number is decreasing. You no longer see a refrigerator stocked with chocolates and roses on V-Day. (During my childhood, I thought roses were edible because every time Mom got some from Dad, she would put them in the ref, beside the chocolates. Later on, I learned that this to was preserve the bouquet. Note: I never tasted the roses!)

Are these group dates, encounters in the dark corners of the streets or videoke bars, text messaging, web-chatting, flesh-flashing or drinking sessions just a phase? Or are they here to stay?

Gone are the days when seeking the parents' permission to go out on a date with their daughter was the most tensile fearful experience in a young man's life (next only to circumcision). Gone are the days when you first get introduced to the girl first before getting her number.

If you are a female, consider yourself lucky if you receive a V-Day card or a bouquet of flowers or hear a love song sung for you on V-Day, instead of a forwarded text message or a smiley. You are one of the fortunate few who will still experience the lost art of love.

Jon Jose C. Balintona, 26, is a registered medical technologist.

Diamonds before me

Rayah Dizon-Maniago

I ENVY PEOPLE WHO CAN FORGET THE ARGUMENTS and pains of a relationship by just looking at their engagement ring. They say that looking at the ring seems to make the world stop and sends musical notes floating in the air.

It is not so me! I cannot stare at a diamond and suddenly be transformed into a blissful mood. If there is an issue to address, we need to talk it over. When I am not in the mood, I would not think twice before throwing a diamond ring into the river, I swear.

It all boils down to the fact that although I appreciate gems, I am not really a jewelry person. I didn't develop strong guilt feelings when I lost most of the gems I got from Mom. For me, pieces of jewelry just seem to pop like bubbles in the air.

An engagement ring is not an exception. It is a big responsibility, a burden to keep that teeny-weeny thing. When we got engaged, Jim and I had a big argument over whether he should get me an engagement ring.

I want to be free of any jewelry, especially when I am doing yoga or swimming. And why not give me a car when it has the same monetary value anyway? To me, anything bigger than a minute stone, like a good book or DVD, is better.

I cannot see the point of wearing an engagement ring. If it is supposed to announce to everyone that the big day is coming, why should the woman alone be carrying that momentous message on her ring finger while the man remains free as a bird?

If the ring is supposed to be a gift, I would much rather have a nice painting. If it is supposed to be a reminder of his love, I would rather that we spend special time and do things together; it is safer to keep those moments in my memory than on my ring finger. If it is supposed to signify commitment, then let the blessed matrimonial ring be the symbol.

People assign values to things. What is precious to one may not be worth much to the rest of the world. Not all women love diamonds.

I love Jim dearly. As we prepare to celebrate Valentine's Day as husband and wife, he has been telling me half-seriously that he would buy a piece of jewelry for me to keep. No, please!

Rayah Dizon-Maniago, 27, is taking up her Ph.D. at Aichi Shukutoku University in Japan.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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Elections don't hold out promise of better future

ELECTIONS ARE ONE OF THE FEW remaining avenues by which the Filipino people can participate in the governance of our country. But a quick look at our past electoral exercises, and at the way the coming electoral exercise is shaping up right now, tells us that elections in the Philippines do not hold much promise for the future. Those in power now seem to be getting away with the fraud they committed in the 2004 elections; and many, if not all of those implicated, have been rewarded with juicy positions in government. Add to that the continuing spate of extrajudicial killings, plus the culture of impunity it has spawned.

Here in Eastern Visayas alone, as of January 2007, the number of extrajudicial killings recorded during the presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has reached 106.

Last Jan. 13, during the launching of the Benedictines for Peace Movement in Eastern Visayas, Archbishop Jose Palma of Palo said: "While admitting that life is difficult now, [I say] it is not hopeless. There is way out of our problems."

Inspired by his words, we, Benedictine Sisters in Eastern Visayas, decided to network with other sectors working for a lasting peace that is based on justice.

For the coming 2007 elections, the Benedictines for Peace Movement will involve itself in the efforts to educate voters and will try to help victims of political repression.

We call on other peace and human rights advocates to join us in this effort. Through our collective effort, we can guarantee our people credible and honest elections. And we will have leaders truly elected by them, and not just "winners" by sinister manipulation of the ballot.

It is our prayer that we take, as our personal crusade, St. Benedict's exhortation for us to "seek peace and pursue justice." For indeed, there is still hope. All we need is to believe and work for its realization.

Vote wisely! Vote for those who will uphold the interest of our country! Vote for those who have in their hearts the aspirations of the least of our brothers and sisters.

Shalom!

—SR. EDITHA ESLOPOR, OSB,
Benedictines for Peace,
Makapawa Office, Lyceum del Verbo
Divino Compound, Imelda St.,
Tacloban City

Media as counterweight to police abuse

AYN RAND, PHILOSOPHER-NOVELIST, once said that the government has the biggest arsenal; it has the military comprising the army, the navy and the air force, all of these financed from the taxes of the people. But the military can pose the greatest threat to individual liberty and freedom.

That's why according to our philosopher, the Bill of Rights is provided for in the Constitution to protect the people.

Our media in Iloilo—print, radio and television—without regard for their safety, and risking life and limb, covered and reported the Jan. 17 police raid on the Iloilo provincial capitol, to inform the whole country of the violations of human rights and due process by armed police operatives.

Let the enemies of democracy be reminded that the motto of the Iloilo media is: "Give the people the light and they will find their way."

—ERNIE DAYOT, Guimbal, Iloilo

New building for Comelec

BECAUSE OF THE FORTHCOMING SENatorial and local elections, we will often see the old, dilapidated Commission on Elections building in Intramuros on TV. And we cannot help but notice that compared to buildings which house other constitutional bodies, like the Civil Service Commission and the Commission on Audit, the Comelec building is "neglected" by the government.

In this connection, I urge the forthcoming 14th Congress to allocate money for the construction of a new Comelec building in the vast government land in Quezon City. This is the least we can do for a constitutional body like the Comelec.

—PAUL R. MORTEL,
MBLA Court, Malanday,
Marikina City 1805

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Ombudsman can only recommend relief of officials

THE 1987 PHILIPPINE CONSTITUTION is clear and explicit: the Ombudsman may only recommend the removal or suspension of a public officer. Section 13, (1), (3) and (4) of Article IX, states that the Ombudsman shall:

"(1) Investigate on its own, or on complaint by any person, any act or omission of any public official, employee, office or agency, when such act or omission appears to be illegal, unjust, improper, or inefficient. xxx

"(3) Direct the officer concerned to take appropriate action against a public official or employee at fault, and recommend his removal, suspension, demotion, fine, censure, or prosecution, and ensure compliance therewith."

If the act or omission appears to be illegal, unjust, improper, or inefficient, involving disbursement or use of public funds or property, the Ombudsman's duty is to direct the Commission on Audit to take appropriate action. Section (4) thereof, says the Ombudsman shall:

"(4) Direct the officer concerned, in any appropriate case, and subject to such limitations as may be provided by law, to furnish it with copies of documents relating to contracts or transactions entered into by his office involving the disbursement or use of public funds or properties, and report any irregularity to the Commission on Audit for appropriate action."

A close scrutiny of the provision of the 1987 Philippine Constitution would tell us that there must be a final decision before a removal or any penalty can be effected.

—NORMAN M. VERZOSA,
3/F Integrated Professional
Corporate Center,
14 Quezon Ave.,
Quezon City

Why private citizens yield to gov't corruption

IT IS NOT ENTIRELY THE FAULT OF THE government that it is corrupt. The citizens who "pay" or give in to solicitations are also to blame for the corruption in government.

I used to rashly mock and judge those who "give in," believing that they have no principles or that they simply want an easy way out. But now I know better—after an experience in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

It is not really because the citizens readily pay. Some citizens don't pay. Some just want to do what is right. But, obviously, that's the foolish course of action.

You patiently follow the process until you cannot help but notice its inconsistency due to some employees' inefficiency. You start asking questions and you get glaring excuses and lies—how can you fight that? They slowly torture you with delays, until it reaches a point that you start believing in the "impossibility" of your papers getting processed.

The employees' most effective weapons are time and—the longer it takes you to finish your business—your diminishing resources. And let's not forget their arrogance, as if they are superior to private citizens, as if every citizen they serve is unworthy of their time and favor. So, when following up your papers, don't forget to say "Thank you" and "Please" with a trembling voice—that is, if you don't want your paper "buried," according to one employee. And never report any act of solicitation, no one will lift a finger in response. Instead, you will be humiliated and burdened with the task of proving it—as if anyone asking for money would be so stupid to do it in a very obvious manner.

Even if officemates know that your accusation is true, they'd just laugh it off. They'd be afraid to side with you or conduct an investigation lest they be derided for being "self-righteous." An outsider's complaint is not worth the risk of losing the friendship of every one else in the whole department.

You think that your complaint will speed up the processing of your papers? On the contrary. The person you reported will take it personally. And it will be you who will be "punished." You'll suffer more delays and more "obstacles" until you feel you're standing all alone unprotected, frustrated, exhausted and helpless; until you hear a familiar refrain you've heard a long, long time ago: "*Ganyan talaga, kung gusto mong lumakad ang mga papeles mo*, there's so much space under the table."

—LIBERTY L. CATBAGAN,
lcontessa@yahoo.com

A very expensive road-repair estimate

THIS IS A REACTION TO A NEWS ITEM about the hundred lakes in Eastern Samar. (INQUIRER, 1/20/07) The report quoted an official of the Department of Public Works and Highways as saying that it takes P10 million to repair a one-kilometer stretch of the asphalted national road in that province. I recall a 337-meter-long barangay road project in Balangiga, Eastern Samar in 2005. It was as wide as the national road and was cemented eight inches thick. Jointly implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the municipal government of Balangiga and the members of the community under the KALAHI CIDSS Project, it cost only P1 million. That would mean the cost of paving a road is roughly P3 million per kilometer.

—HERMILANDO ABERIA,
adregnum@yahoo.com.ph
B21 L59 Kassel Kristina Heights,
Tacloban City

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Why can't I come home?
- Ninoy Aquino
Dare to ask.
Be an Inquirer.
INQUIRER

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2007 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER A15

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Lim may run vs De Venecia in Pangasinan

LIM

DE VENECIA

DAGUPAN CITY—There is no stopping Mayor Benjamin Lim now from running against Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. in the congressional race in Pangasinan's fourth district in May.

Short of formally proclaiming his candidacy, Lim said he was becoming "more and more" encouraged by the support he was getting from people from the district.

The district is composed of Dagupan City and the towns of Mangaldan, San Fabian, San Jacinto and Manaoag.

"It has been getting more and more encouraging," Lim told the INQUIRER.

"If before, all I heard was 'Why not?' whenever I asked them what they thought if I run for congressman, now they tell me that they will support me."

He said that in several towns of the district, complete lineups had already been formed, with him as their congressional candidate.

"The people in the district really want change. They are tired of the present situation. They are tired of promises; they want action; they want economic improvement," he said.

He added: "So, it is sad because we have had that opportunity to (make the district) become more progressive, with De Venecia being the Speaker for 12 years."

"And yet we don't see the same kind of progress that we see in Cavite, Laguna, Pampanga, Bulacan, Cebu and in many parts of the country. They don't even have a Speaker in their area and yet they are all progressive."

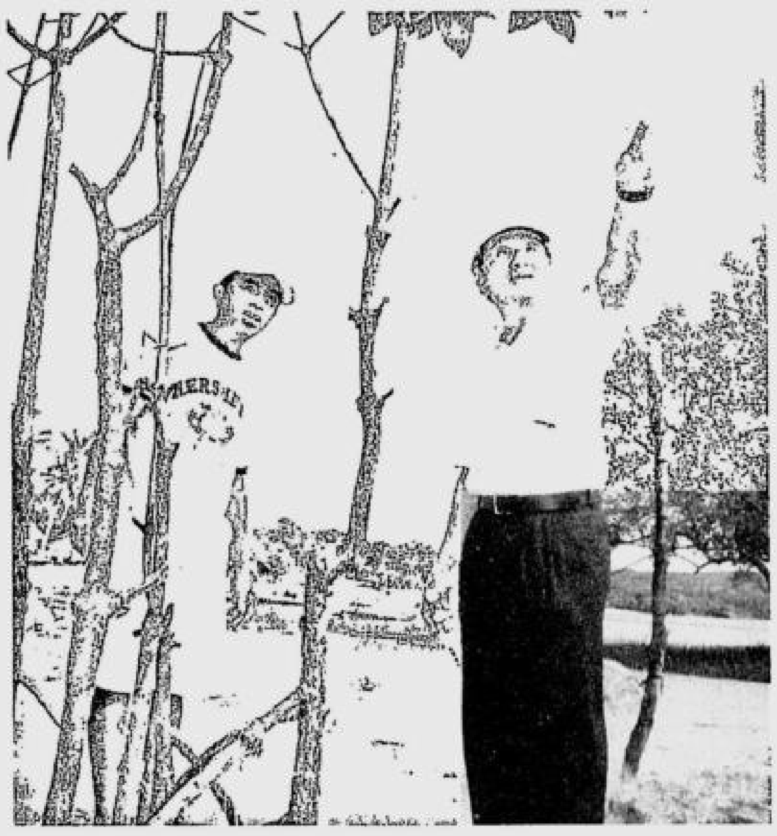
Lim said he still had to announce his candidacy "much earlier" than the deadline for the filing of candidacy for local elective positions on March 29.

If he finally decides to run for congressman, he said he would have no choice but to join the opposition.

Although he has not been expelled yet from the administration Lakas-CMD, he said he felt his expulsion was coming.

"I hope that they will also consider making the fourth district a free zone. That would be a very exciting [electoral] exercise," he said. *Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

PRESIDENTIAL Adviser for Western Visayas Rafael Coscolluela visits Barangay Tando in December after the oil spill hit Nueva Valencia in August. Coscolluela made an ocular inspection to assess the rehabilitation program of Guimaras Island. The process of rehabilitation is slow, although some residents who rely heavily on fishing for their livelihood, have started receiving payments. ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS



Victims of Petron oil spill receive payments

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE INTERNATIONAL OIL Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Fund has paid a total of P120.3 million to victims of the Solar I oil spill in Guimaras.

IOPC Deputy Director Joe Nichols said in an e-mail that the agency had approved and paid for the claims of 11,361 people from the towns of Jordan, Sibunag, Nueva Valencia, Buenavista and San Lorenzo.

At least 300 claimants did not come forward to receive their compensation, Nichols said.

The IOPC will soon process the claims of 3,000 people engaged in fishing from the towns of Oton, Concepcion and Ajuy in Iloilo, as well as 77 claims of seaweed farmers and 90 fishpond operators from Guimaras.

Nichols said the agency would settle the claims of the second batch of victims from Guimaras after they have paid the claimants from Iloilo.

The oil spill has brought sufferings to 5,437 families, or 26,740 persons, after the tanker sank in stormy seas off Guimaras on Aug. 11 and dumped more than 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel oil it was transporting for Petron Corp. from Bataan to Zamboanga.

The Coast Guard said it believed that around 300,000 liters spilled into the sea, contaminating coastal areas with oil sludge.

At least 13,000 people, mostly engaged in fishing, have filed claims for damages after the spill contaminated fishing grounds and devastated the island's rich marine life and tourism sites.

The IOPC, a London-based intergovernmental agency that indemnifies losses resulting from oil spills, has paid the claimants engaged in fishing amounts ranging from P3,000 to P32,000.

It has also released initial payments to at least 34 operators of resorts and other tourism sites from P1,000 to P250,000.

Church groups, led by Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines president and Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, along with environmental groups and non-government organizations, have called for higher compensation for the victims, claiming that the amount being paid by the IOPC was not enough to cover their losses.

But the IOPC officials have said that they came up with the amount of compensation based on the IOPC field surveys and the type of fishing the claimants were engaged in.

Nichols said the removal of the remaining oil from the wreck was expected to start March 14. He said the duration of the operation would depend on how much oil remains onboard but they expect the operation to take 10 to 20 days.

Insurers of the sunken tanker and the IOPC have contracted the salvage firm Sonsub to remove the oil from the wreck at a depth of 640 meters from the sea floor.

The operation is estimated to cost between $6 million and $12 million, depending on the volume of oil left.

Several groups and leaders of the province had asked residents to reject a waiver that they were allegedly being made to sign upon acceptance of the payment. The waiver allegedly would prevent the victims from filing cases in court in the future.

PASEGURUHAN NG MGA NAGLILINGKOD SA PAMAHALAAN
(GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM)
Financial Center, Pasay City, Metro Manila 1308

GSIS CENTRAL OFFICE ENROLLMENT SCHEDULE GUIDE

GSIS Members Working in Agencies Located at	Enrollment Center / Address	Enrollment Period
Pasay City	GSIS Head Office, Pasay City	February 15 – April 18
Makati City	GSIS Head Office, Pasay City	February 15 – April 18
Selected agencies in Manila: 1. Department of Environment & Natural Resources Region-IV, Roxas Blvd. 2. Department of Finance 3. Environmental Management Bureau 4. Philippine Navy Flag Officer in Command—Civilian 5. Home Development Mutual Fund, Malate Branch 6. Landbank of the Philippines Head Office, Malate 7. Philippine Conventions & Visitors Corporation, Malate 8. Philippine Sports Commission	GSIS Head Office, Pasay City	February 15 – April 18
City of Manila	Metropolitan Theatre, Liwasang Bonifacio	February 15 – April 18
Quezon City	GSIS Quezon City Field Office, Elliptical Road	February 15 – April 18
Navotas	Navotas Municipal Hall	February 15 – 23
Malabon City	Navotas Municipal Hall	February 15 – 23
Valenzuela City	Valenzuela City Hall	February 26 – March 6
Caloocan City	Caloocan City Hall	March 8 – 26
Pasig City	Pasig City Hall	February 15 – April 3
San Juan	San Juan Municipal Hall	February 15 – 20
Mandaluyong City	Mandaluyong City Hall	February 22 – March 28
Taguig City	Taguig City Hall	February 15 – April 12
Pateros	Taguig City Hall	February 15 – April 12
Muntinlupa City	Muntinlupa City Hall	February 15 – March 9
Las Piñas City	Las Piñas City Hall	March 12 – 27
Parañaque City	Parañaque City Hall	February 15 – March 28
Cavite Province	Provincial Capitol, Trece Martires City	February 15 – April 18
Rizal Province	Ynares Center, Antipolo City	February 15 – April 18
Marikina City	Ynares Center, Antipolo City	February 15 – April 18
Bulacan Province	DepEd Training Center, Capitol Compound, Malolos City	February 15 – April 18

METRO
Citizen's Call

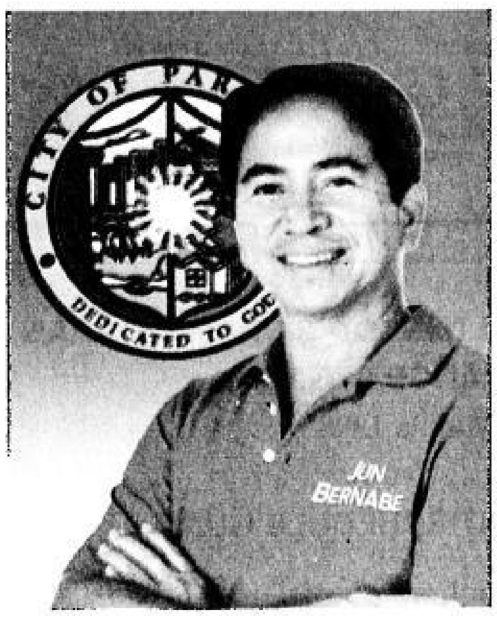
Our City of Affections and Disaffections is made up of stories.
Your stories. Tell us all about it.

- Did a signage make your day?
- Garbage dumped on your street unmake your day?
- Street diggings forever on the street where you live?
- Are you up in arms against the demolition of an ancestral house?
- Awed by a little-known barangay project with a big positive impact in your community?
- Got stuck in potholes?
- Fed up with cussing and feuding neighbors?
- Is there an everyday role model in your neighborhood?
- Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?

JUST TEXT SMS: ccall name/age/location <message>
MMS: <insert photo> ccall name/age/location <caption/message>

0918-8985566

P.S. Please don't send tips on criminal activities and scams. Call the police. INQUIRER



Non-working holiday today!!

Parañaque marks its 9th Year as a City

by Nelson A. Lacambra & Eduard P. Blanco

Malacañang has declared February 13 a non-working holiday in Parañaque City to allow the city residents to celebrate today the 9th Anniversary of its conversion from a municipality to a highly urbanized city.

Mayor Florencio "Jun" Bernabe will lead local city officials and employees, and multi-sectoral groups in marking the anniversary with various activities spread over a week leading to and after the day itself.

Launched on February 5, which coincided with the birthday of Mayor Bernabe, were various free medical services under the auspices of the Parañaque City Health Office at the City Hall. Among the free services are FBS (Fasting Blood Sugar), cholesterol determination, bone scanning, osteoporosis checkup, and dental and optical checks-up.

Barangay chairmen and chairwomen of Districts I and II with Parañaque City Mayor Florencio "Jun" Bernabe and District I Representative Eduardo "Edzu" Zialcita.

Staring tomorrow, February 14, Mayor Bernabe will lead the launching at the Parañaque City National High School on Dr. Arcadio Santos Ave. (formerly Sucat Road) of the so-called SHINE Caravan (Sa Health Ikauunlad Nang ating Ekonomiya) which will be brought to the city's 16 barangays where various free medical, dental and optical services will be given to city residents. This program will continue for the next six months until all the barangays shall have been covered and served.

District I Representative Ed Zialcita, Mayor Jun Bernabe and Vice-Mayor Anjo Yllana with the District I Councilors

For jobseekers who are legitimate residents of the city, the Parañaque Livelihood and Resource Management Office (PLRMO) has opened a month-long Jobs Fair at the City Hall grounds...Close to 60 large and medium-sized business firms operating in and nearby Parañaque which have consistently supported previous city job fairs are again participating.

Other highlights of the celebration included a free concert organized by the Parañaque Youth and Sports Office at the Amvel Park along Ninoy Aquino Ave. last February 11 featuring some of today's hottest bands and solo performers in the local music and entertainment world.

The Cultural and Tourism Office has also lined up a Birds Festival in cooperation with the Birds Club of the Philippines on February 12. A highlight of the program was a guided bird watching tour at an elevated ramp across the bird sanctuary in Barangay La Huerta. Majority of the bird watchers are organized groups of students from various public and private schools in Parañaque, among them students and pupils of St. Paul College and St. Andrew School in Parañaque. The guided tours included lectures on the hazards of avian flu or bird flu and how to avoid getting infected with the deadly H5N1 flu virus.

Another upcoming entertainment fare is the staging of ***Prinsipe Rodante***, a presentation of Komedya ng San Dionisio on February 18, 5:00 p.m. at SM City-Sucat. Admission to the anniversary special is free to the public.

Being a holiday today in the city, there are but a few activities that have taken or currently taking place now. Except for one or two private get-togethers that he has reserved for his family, closest friends and associates, to observe the anniversary, Mayor Bernabe nevertheless urged his constituents to mark the day by reflecting and thanking their little stars for the many positive changes and improvements that have been introduced or initiated by the city government led by Mayor Jun Bernabe himself for their benefit, and prestige and honor for the city in the past year or so.

The awards and citations that Mayor Bernabe and his city administration have received from credible and prestigious award-giving bodies here and abroad are indeed reflective of the great strides that the city has achieved in the comparatively short span of time of two-and-a-half years.

The awards also serve to validate the visible achievements and solid accomplishments that not only brought honor to Parañaque City and pride among its constituents, but more importantly, propelled the neophyte mayor into a position of prominence in local governance.

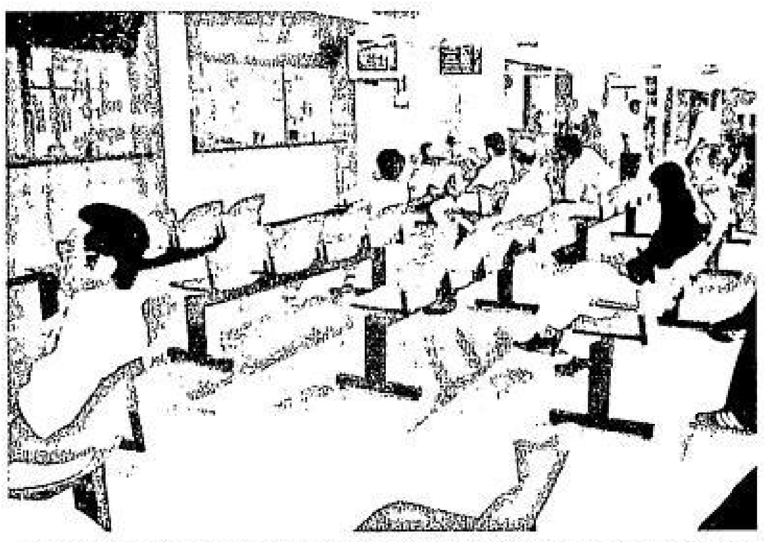
Councilors of District II together with Vice-Mayor Anjo Yllana.

Special Citation In Fiscal Management

The coveted Special Citation in Fiscal Management was given by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry during its Philippine Business Conference at the Manila Hotel on October 20, 2006.

The award was in recognition of Mayor Bernabe's judicious utilization of scarce resources and restrained financial management style. He introduced changes in the tax collection system and backed it with the construction of a fully-air-conditioned, fully-computerized Taxpayers and Assessor's lounges, part of the rehabilitation and expansion of City Hall. In these lounges taxpayers are comfortably seated with a choice of coffee or fruit juices with biscuits to boot while waiting for their numbers to be flashed on an electronic board.

This new system has resulted in cutting down processing and paying times to only a few minutes. As a matter of fact, the Business Permit and License Office (BPLO), for the first time in years, has reported a zero backlog in the issuance of business permits.



TAXPAYERS LOUNGE: Taxpayers sit comfortably in a fully airconditioned, fully computerized taxpayers lounge while waiting for numbers to be electronically flashed.

As a result of the new system and procedures introduced by Mayor Bernabe, the city government has, for the past two years, recorded unprecedented increases in tax collection and gradually reduced the huge debt burden that the previous city administration had left behind for the new city government to deal with.

When Bernabe took over as city mayor in July 2004 following his win in the May 10, 2004 local and national elections, he inherited from the previous administration maturing bank loans and payables to contractors, suppliers and government agencies to the tune of close to P1 billion. Today, that liability is down to about P200 million, the result of the reformed tax collection system he instituted in early 2005.

In many ways, real property taxpayers who previously refused to pay or reluctantly paid their taxes came to pay their correct taxes on time after seeing that the new system coupled with judicious and restrained spending began yielding positive and visible results. With an expanded tax base and higher annual revenues (now growing at an annualized rate of 32 percent), the city government proceeded to implement an ambitious infrastructure development program beginning in the third quarter of year 2004. The initial result included the construction of two four-storey public school buildings in barangays Moonwalk and Sun Valley which were opened in time for the school opening in June, 2005. More public schools, in fact, were expanded or rehabilitated to mitigate the perennial problem of classroom shortages and help ease classroom congestion in other schools in neighboring areas.

Vice-Mayor Anjo Yllana, District II Representative Roilo Golez, City Mayor Jun Bernabe and District I Representative Ed Zialcita grouped themselves together for a photo session after attending one of the affairs in the city

Outstanding City Mayor of the Philippines

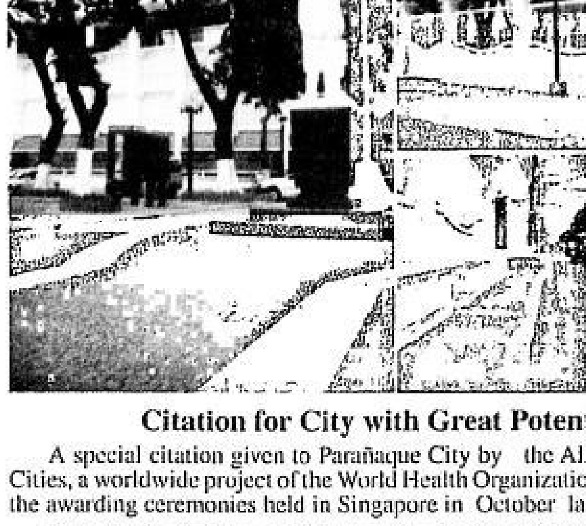
A month before year 2006 came to a close Mayor Bernabe bagged what in the opinion of many is perhaps one of the most difficult awards to win due to its stringent criteria and comprehensive screening process – the Local Government Leadership Awards as Outstanding City Mayor of the Philippines. It is for this reason that local government executives – provincial governors, city mayors, and municipal mayors - consider it a most coveted and prestigious award.

For one, the screening committee goes beyond merely scrutinizing the track record of a nominee in local government administration and governance. It also validates the track record and his leadership capability and qualities through comprehensive interviews with his close associates and neutral parties, observation and ocular inspection of what he claims to be his visible accomplishments.

This is done through a collaborative effort of the office of Sen. Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr. with the University of the Philippines, Center for Local and Regional Governance, National College of Public Administration and Governance, Local Government Academy, Department of Interior and Local Government; La Salle Institute of Governance, De La Salle University; and the Center for Governance, Development Academy of the Philippines.

In winning the award, Mayor Bernabe scored highly for his leadership quality which the awards committee described as moral, participative, distributive and service-motivated.

In all, the Local Government Leadership Awards gave due recognition to his dynamism and innovative management and governance style, as well as acknowledge the numerous programs and projects that his administration has accomplished and delivered for the benefit and greater good of the people of Parañaque.



***PARAÑAQUE CITY HALL:** The Parañaque City Hall after undergoing a major facelift and rehabilitation.*

Citation for City with Great Potential

A special citation given to Parañaque City by the Alliance of Healthy Cities, a worldwide project of the World Health Organization (WHO), during the awarding ceremonies held in Singapore in October last year.

The award cited the Parañaque city government for setting the basic fundamentals needed to carry out and implement a comprehensive long-term program for a wide range of services that cuts across various departments and offices in the Parañaque City Hall.

On health, the Alliance for Healthy Cities awards committee took cognizance of the city government's aggressive program to safeguard and improve its constituents' well-being through improved health care and medical, dental and optical services, and environmental sanitation.

On the delivery of basic services, education, health care, livelihood and employment, infrastructure development, peace and order, and cleanliness and beautification are at the top of the list of priorities of the city government. As such, the effort of Mayor Bernabe to improve the required service delivery systems was given high marks by the international body which sees in Parañaque the potential of becoming a model city.

Message

My warmest felicitations to all my fellow Parañaqueños on the occasion of the Ninth Cityhood Anniversary of our beloved Parañaque today.

Today, we are witnessing many great changes in our midst, changes that have given not only a new face to our community, but have also given each one of us a stronger sense of affinity with our city which we are endeavoring to transform into a model modern city that will be globally competitive in many respects in line with our vision.

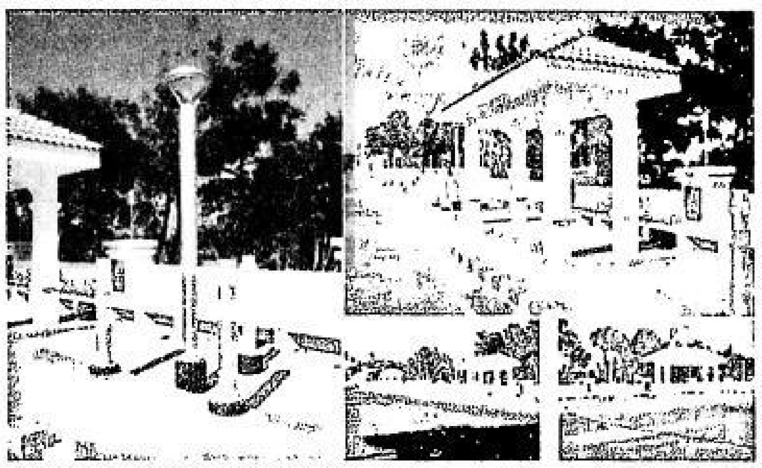
Indeed, there is much to be gratified with. Much improvement has been achieved in improving our educational system, particularly our public school system by continuously adding more classrooms to ease the perennial congestion in many of our public schools. We have cleaned up our streets of garbage and continue to collect household trash on a regular weekly house-to-house basis to successfully shed our previous image as a garbage city. More taxpayers are now paying their taxes correctly and promptly due to the ease and speed in which processing and payments are made. The delivery of health care and medical services has been vastly improved allowing more of our residents to avail of and enjoy attention and benefits of a well-motivated health workforce and upgraded facilities. Our streets are now not only better maintained but are also well-lighted and the sidewalks enhanced with a new uniform look. Above all, service to the public starting at the City Hall down to the barangay level has been perceptively swift and given with a smile. And more but too long to list.

It is often said that the past is a source of knowledge and the future a source of hope..Over the past two years-and-a-half, we have avoided the mistakes committed in the past carrying out our programs and projects for your benefits. More than anything, the prudence and transparency with which we managed the affairs of the city have produced an ambience that allows us to look at the future of the city as a whole with optimism for better things to come.

On this the ninth year of the conversion of Parañaque from a laid-back municipality into a buoyant highly-urbanized city, let's all join hands and move forward as one on the road map that we have charted for the city today and tomorrow.

Mabuhay po tayong lahat!

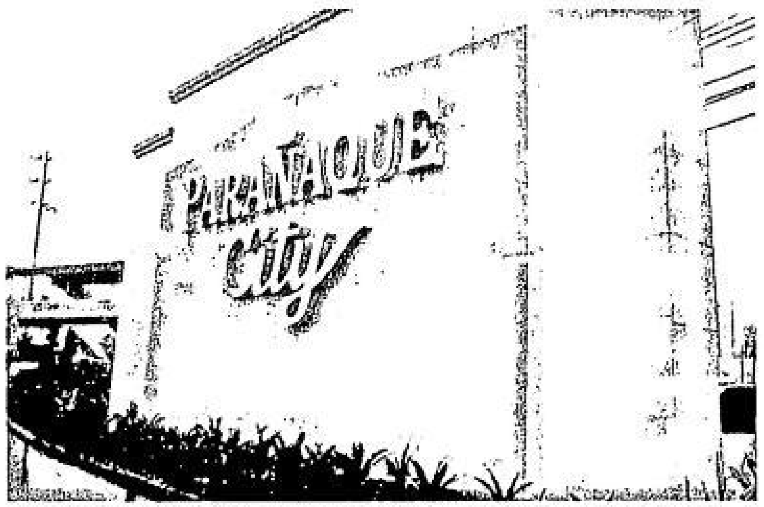
FLORENCIO "JUN" BERNABE
City Mayor



***REDEVELOPMENT OF SIDEWALKS:** As part of the massive beautification program of the city, street lamps have been installed on major city streets and the sidewalks rehabilitated and enhanced with a uniform look.*

Outstanding Public Servant Award

The Consumer Union of the Philippines (CUP) picked Mayor Bernabe as Outstanding Public Servant Award for 2006for transforming Parañaque City into a clean and beautiful city.



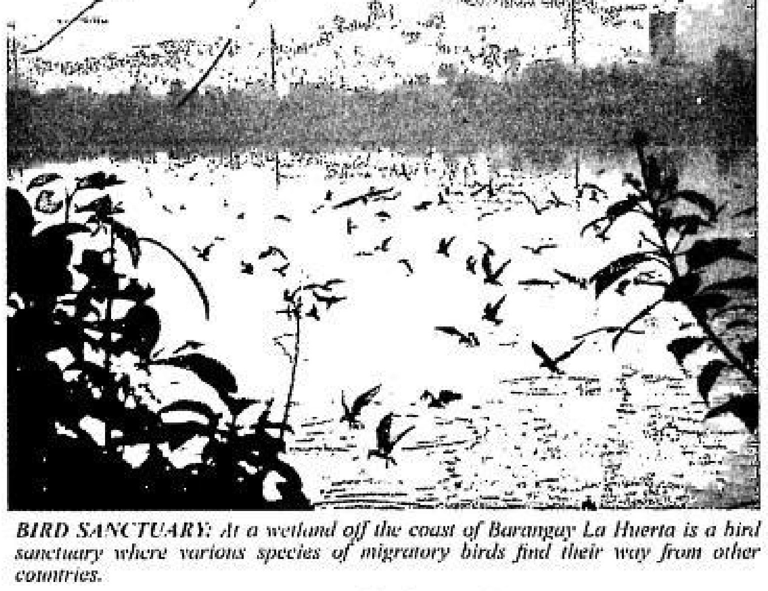
***PARAÑAQUE MARKER:** An imposing city marker at the Parañaque end of Dra. A. Santos Ave. (formerly Sucat Road) greet visitors to the city.*

Most Outstanding Award for Excellence in Coop-LGU Partnership for 2006

Being himself a strong advocate of the cooperative movement and entrepreneurship, it was but fitting for Mayor Jun Benabe to be honored with the Most Outstanding Award for Excellence in Coop-LGU Partnership for 2006 which he received from Sen. Aquilino Q. Pimentel, Jr., author of the Coop Code, at the Claro M. Recto Room of the Philippine Senate on January 23, 2007.

The cooperative partner in this case is the San Dionisio Credit Cooperative, Inc. (SDCCI), a pioneer Parañaque credit cooperative based in Barangay San Dionisio whose various programs and initiatives for the benefit of its members have always found support and encouragement from the local government headed by Mayor Bernabe.

In recognition of his effort to promote the growth of cooperatives in his city, Mayor Bernabe received the award "for the achievements of a cooperative that has partnered with a local government unit (LGU) in the implementation of projects that contributed to the improvement of the quality of life and empowerment of the community."



***BIRD SANCTUARY:** At a wetland off the coast of Barangay La Huerta is a bird sanctuary where various species of migratory birds find their way from other countries.*

...and the future?

Mayor Bernabe looks at the future with great optimism.

"I have a clear vision of what I want Parañaque to be – a clean and beautiful city that is economically progressive; peaceful, safe and orderly where the people have equal opportunity to improve their quality of life and access to social justice. I also have the road map to achieve this vision," a determined Mayor Bernabe said, adding that if the people want continuity, the choice is theirs.

Quezon exec says DILG behind 'jueteng' return

REM ZAMORA

TREE OF KNOWLEDGE
The shades of a tree in Luuk town in Jolo provide an alternative to a classroom for these students of the Luuk National High School who rest in preparation for their classes.

LUCENA CITY—A SENIOR provincial board member has pointed to an unidentified official of the Department of the Interior and Local Government as the man behind the resurrection of the illegal numbers game "jueteng" in Quezon province.

"Jueteng in any province will not thrive without the go-signal from the DILG," said Board Member Eladio Pasamba.

"It is the one issuing the final order to the police—from Camp Crame to the provincial police director down to the town police chief."

"Police officials have no other recourse but to obey the order. We can't blame them because it is an order from the higher-ups," he added.

Earlier, a town mayor disclosed that a group of gambling brokers, allegedly under the protection of an unidentified Cabinet official, had been luring local government executives in the province to call for a stop to the government-run small town lottery to pave the way for the immediate return of jueteng.

The move meant an exchange for *payola* in time for the election campaign season, he said.

Board Member Isaias Ubana II said he would call on Senior Supt. Victorio Caragan Jr., Quezon police chief, to appear before the Sangguniang Panlalawigan and explain why jueteng has resumed in the province.

Caragan denied the allegation that he was protecting illegal gambling. He said he was ready to appear before the board anytime.

"I have nothing to hide and have nothing to fear," he said.

Representatives Danilo Suarez (3rd District) and Proceso Alcala (2nd District) called on Caragan to swoop down on all suspected jueteng dens and arrest persons involved, including their protectors from the government.

According to Suarez, rampant jueteng operations have again resurfaced in the towns of San Narciso, San Andres, Mulanay and Buenavista in the Bondoc Peninsula area.

He confirmed the information earlier provided by Quezon Bishop Emilio Marquez that a certain Fany Abella and one Tony Ong, were behind the jueteng revival in the province.

"According to my information, Abella is a mistress of a retired police general that's why she's too bold in her operation," Suarez said over the phone.

Caragan said he would immediately form a special unit to investigate the reports.

When news of jueteng resumption was reported by the INQUIRER last month, Ubana sponsored a resolution opposing the return of the unlawful lottery.

"But with these reports coming no less than from Bishop Marquez that jueteng continued to operate, it seems that our call is being ignored. The police have a lot of explaining to do," Ubana said.

On Friday, Marquez, Diocese of Lucena head, assailed the revival of jueteng and urged voters to expose local government officials behind it.

Marquez said he would soon issue a pastoral letter to remind voters to remain vigilant against politicians who would use campaign funds from illegal sources, particularly jueteng and drugs. *Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Deal cut in Malacañang to pave way for unopposed Leyte poll bids

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—A NEPHEW OF former first lady Imelda Marcos, who is seeking a congressional seat in Leyte's first district, would likely run unopposed.

Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, son of former Leyte Gov. Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, said President Macapagal-Arroyo convinced incumbent Rep. Remedios Petilla not to seek reelection.

"I feel overjoyed now that she was persuaded by the President not to run. This will not only benefit me personally, but (also) our people," Romualdez said in an interview.

Romualdez said he and Petilla met the President in Malacañang on Saturday morning to find a "win-win solution" to avert a collision between the two most dominant political families in Leyte.

"The meeting was somewhat tension-filled but everything went smoothly. I know it was not easy for her to decide not to seek reelection. And I thank her for accepting the bidding of the President. She is, after all, concerned about the benefit of our people," Romualdez said.

Aside from Petilla and Romualdez, Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats regional chair Rep. Marcelino Libanan and presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio, who is also the Cabinet officer for Regional Development in Eastern Visayas, attended the meeting.

Petilla, who belongs to the Lakas-CMD but is an ally of the President, said she respected the decision of the President and would not mind returning to the Capitol. Like Romualdez, she would most likely run unopposed.

According to Petilla, she agreed to run for governor since this would enable her to serve not only the first congressional district but also the entire province, which is composed of 41 towns and the cities of Ormoc and Tacloban.

She had held the gubernatorial post for nine straight years. Her son Jericho Carlos succeeded her as governor.

The first congressional district is composed of the towns of Palo, Babatngon, Alangalang, Sta. Fe, San Miguel, Tolosa, Tanauan and Tacloban.

Romualdez, 44, who is seeking a public office for the first time, will run under the banner of the President's own political party, Kilusan ng Malayang Pilipino.

The incumbent governor, Jericho Carlos, who is Petilla's son, is running for senator under the administration.

Buri may yet save Ifugao rice terraces from worms

DELMAR CARINO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

THE AMBURAYAN River cuts through the Pasdong rice terraces.

BAGUIO CITY—The buri palm that grows abundantly in warm areas and in coastal plains may yet save Ifugao's rice terraces from deterioration caused by giant earthworms.

A recent study conducted by the ecosystems research and development sector (ERDS) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Cordillera found that buri fruit extracts were effective organic vermicides (substances that kill worms).

Aside from increasing vegetation, giant earthworms, called locally as "*kolang*," have threatened to collapse the rice terraces since they tunnel through the soil and riprap dikes that cause soil erosion and water to leak from the rice paddies.

Ifugao farmers said the tunneling has also contributed to the decrease in soil fertility and low yield of the terraces.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) has listed the Ifugao terraces as one of the world's endangered heritage sites.

"The research is considered a breakthrough since the farmers and the DENR had been searching for effective measures against the earthworms," Samuel Peñafiel, DENR Cordillera director, said.

The ERDS research team conducted the study from October to December last year and found that buri fruit extracts were able to kill giant earthworms.

The team conducted laboratory and field trials that involved 22 kilograms of buri fruits which were divided in groups and soaked in water in varying time periods before extraction. The extracts were strained and prepared in different dosages or concentrations.

The team, composed of Evangeline Martinez, Marylou Andrada, Imelda Ngaloy and George Tomin, found that in both trials, earthworm mortality was high.

It observed that the higher the dosage of buri fruit extracts, the more immediate the effect on the earthworms.

Earthworms immersed in extracts with higher concentrations died faster while those treated in lower dosages took a longer time to die, the team said.

The extracts showed that they are more potent when the fruits were fermented or soaked for at least two days or more before extraction.

The researchers said the earthworms wriggled fast when immersed in the extract, indicating paralysis and death.

The natural sciences research unit of Saint Louis University here conducted a phytochemical analysis of the buri extracts and found that they had high levels of tannin and steroids that are acidic, bitter and have an unpleasant taste.

The analysis showed that the green soapy substances that came out during the extraction contained compounds with antiviral and antifungal properties.

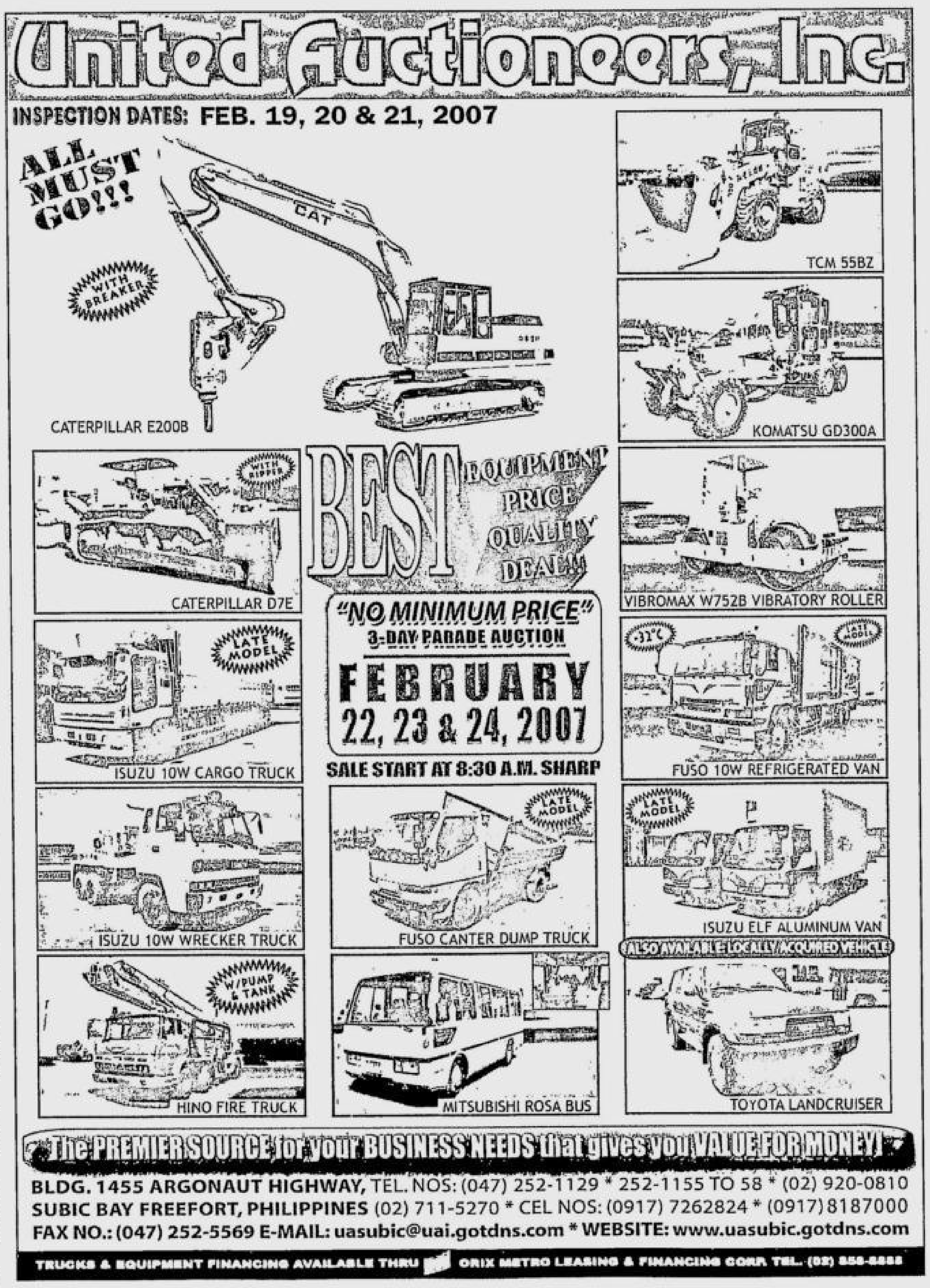
Martinez, the study team leader, said Moises Butic, the DENR's community environment and natural resources officer (Cenro) in Ifugao, first raised the idea of studying the potentials of the buri palm against earthworms.

She said Butic and Dr. Lydia Tibus, a veterinarian, observed that earthworms came out of the ground where buri fruits were thrown near the Cenro Compound.

The observation led students of the Ifugao Science High School in Lamut town to conduct their own experiment. They found that the buri extract killed the earthworms in less than three minutes.

Butic relayed the results to Peñafiel and Egidio Costales, the DENR regional technical director for research, who asked the ERDS to conduct a full study.

Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon



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Blackout on Nigeria hostages

By Cynthia D. Balana and TJ Burgonio

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY IMposed a news blackout on the status of the 26 Filipino kidnap victims in Nigeria, for their protection and to prevent the collapse of negotiations for their release.

Vice President Noli de Castro, presidential adviser on overseas Filipino workers, asked the media to cooperate in this "life-or-death situation."

"The kidnappers react strongly whenever they read that ransom is being discussed," he told the INQUIRER in an interview.

De Castro declined to say whether the payment of ransom was being considered as an option to secure the release of the 26 Filipinos—24 seafarers, an engineer and a woman.

According to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Philippine Ambassador to Nigeria Masaranga R. Umpa had assured him that the Nigerian government was doing everything to end the hostage situation.

Romulo admitted though that there was no word on whether Josiebeth G. Foroozan, the Filipino hostage married to an Iranian, was still alive.

Foroozan's sister, Jane Gregorio, told the media yesterday that the kidnappers had threatened members of her sister's family who were still in Nigeria.

Gabriela and Migrante International urged the government to take "direct and resolute action" and press the Nigerian government to put an end to the "hostage crisis."

Foroozan, 37, of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, became the 26th Filipino to be kidnapped by unidentified men in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta after a Filipino engineer was snatched on Feb. 6, and the 24 crewmen on Jan. 20.

"We're worried sick about the condition of the two kids and my three cousins there (Nigeria). We appeal to the government to bring them home," a teary-eyed Gregorio told reporters at the Migrante office in Quezon City.

She said the kidnappers had called Foroozan's husband, Manoucher, and threatened their family last Saturday.

Gregorio said the kidnappers used her sister's mobile phone.

Foroozan has a daughter, Farzaneh, 14, and a son, Afshin, 11, with Manoucher.

Gregorio first aired her appeal when she and Occidental Mindoro Gov. Josephine Ramirez Sato met with Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos last Friday.

"Conejos assured us he would exhaust all means and would speak with my brother-in-law. If they're allowed to come home, he doesn't see any problem with this," she said in the joint briefing with Gabriela and Migrante officials.

"Even my brother-in-law feels they're not safe there in Nigeria. They're afraid they might become the next victims after CNN showed their pictures, including those of the children, on TV," she added.

Foroozan was seized by unidentified men at midday on Feb. 7 near a bank on Stadium Road in Port Harcourt, Nigeria's capital. She managed to call her husband before her phone was taken by the kidnappers.

Reacting to the kidnappings, President Macapagal-Arroyo said: "I've told (Labor Secretary Arturo) Brion that for trouble spots, we should allow voluntary repatriation. We have a program of voluntary repatriation, so those who want to come home can come through the facilities of the government." *With Michael Lim Ubac*

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Spat about toilet habit leads to tragic end

Man irked by neighbor dies in shootout with Las Piñas policemen

By Julie M. Aurelio

WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A LAZY Sunday afternoon in a neighborhood in Las Piñas City turned into a suspense-filled few hours when an altercation broke out between two residents.

The incident started when Felix Bulatao, 34, relieved himself in front of his neighbor's house in Gloria Compound, Barangay Pilar and was shot by the irate owner.

Bulatao was rushed to the Las Piñas Medical Center after he was hit in the left arm.

The owner of the house, Eliazar Villa Vicencio, 45, later fired at policemen who responded and asked him to surrender. They fired back, hitting him several times. He died while being treated at a hospital.

According to witnesses, Bulatao and another neighbor stopped in front of Villa Vicencio's house at around 4:30 p.m. Sunday.

Bulatao proceeded to relieve himself but as he did so, the suspect saw him from the second floor of his house.

An argument broke out between the two. It ended when Villa Vicencio shot the victim, hitting him in the arm. Neighbors rushed Bulatao to the Las Piñas Medical Center where he remains under observation.

Neighbors who heard the gunshots immediately called the police.

A Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) team responded but when they asked the suspect to surrender, he refused and barricaded himself inside his house.

The SWAT team then approached the house but were forced to take cover when Villa Vicencio suddenly fired at them, forcing them to return fire.

Villa Vicencio was hit six times, case investigator SPO1 George Gabriel told the INQUIRER. He was hit thrice in the chest, twice in the stomach and once in the knee.

He later died at 7:37 p.m. while undergoing treatment at the Alabang Medical Center.

6 suspects in slay of 2 cops named

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

POLICE HAVE IDENTIFIED SIX SUSPECTS IN the ambush of two policemen engaged in covert intelligence operations in a remote area in Taytay, Rizal on Sunday afternoon.

The suspects, however, remain at large.

"We are holding follow-up operations to arrest the suspects. But at least we know who they are now," Rizal provincial chief, Senior Supt. Freddie Panen, told the INQUIRER.

In an official report, the provincial police named the suspects as Ronnie Tugmah, Jack Tamondong, Zoren Samal, a certain Richie, a certain Erick and a certain John Lado.

PO3 Romeo Maglinao and PO2 Urbano Enero of the Regional Mobile Group were on patrol in Sitio Tapayan, Lupang Arenda at 2:40 p.m. Sunday when four men on board motorcycles fired upon them.

The two policemen were killed instantly.

The ambush happened only 10 days after teams from the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the Maritime Group and the Philippine Marines raided a house in Lupang Arenda in search of suspected bomb experts working for a rebel group.

A man was killed while three others, including a suspected member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, were arrested during the police operation.

Another stude in QC poison case arraigned

By DJ Yap

AFTER A SERIES OF DELAYS, THE SECOND accused in the controversial poisoning incident at the Philippine Science High School (PSHS) was arraigned yesterday on charges of frustrated murder in a Quezon City court.

"I am not guilty," the respondent, a minor and former PSHS student, told Judge Ma. Lourdes Giron of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 102, after the charges were read to him.

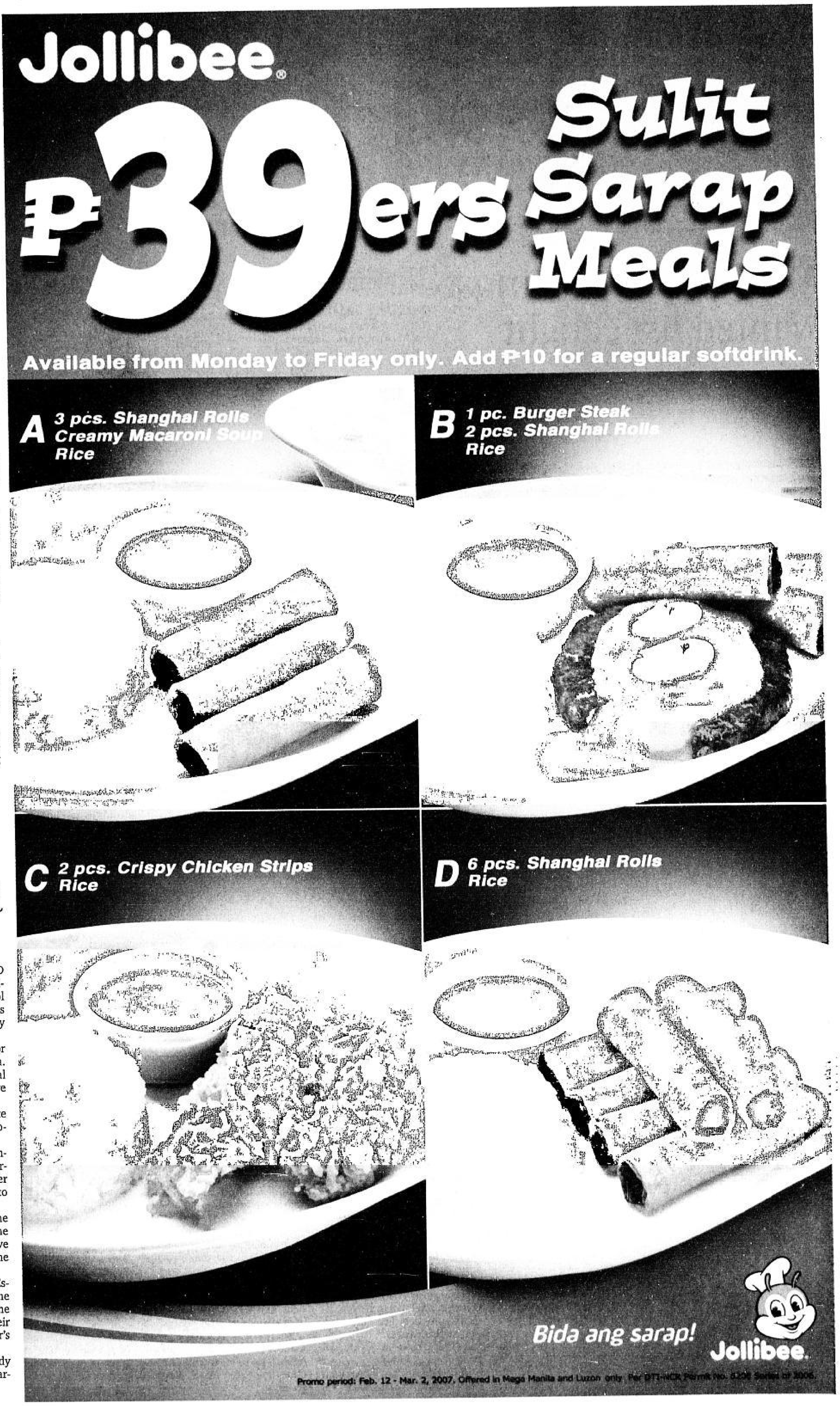
"He was very empathic, I must say," private prosecutor Eugenio Villareal recalled, moments after the hearing.

Along with another classmate, the respondent stands accused of pouring a vial of mercurous nitrate into a fellow student's water jug, causing a classmate who drank from it to sustain severe internal injuries.

In their respective counter-affidavits, the two students, who were 16 at the time of the incident, denied the charges, but they gave conflicting statements as to who was the one liable.

The respondent's lawyer, Eric Vincent Estoesta, sought another postponement of the arraignment by filing a motion to defer the proceedings, pending the resolution of their motion for reconsideration in the prosecutor's office.

But Giron said the motions had already been denied and ordered the immediate arraignment of the accused, Villareal said.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Employee dies in Malate car repair shop fire

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A dog gets ready to greet customers at Kainan nila Doktora & Pet Restoran, a restaurant which caters to both humans and their animal companions. The restaurant on Visayas Avenue, Quezon City is beside a veterinary clinic. ROGER CARPIO

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A MAN WAS KILLED WHILE TWO other people were injured when a fire broke out in an automobile repair shop in Manila yesterday morning.

The fatality was identified as Manuel Benosa, 49, an employee of the garage and repair shop owned by the De Guzman family located at 2400 Arellano Street in Malate, Manila.

SFO2 Wilson Tana of the Manila Fire Department said garage owner Arlene de Guzman, 28, suffered second-degree burns on her left arm and right hand while taxi driver Edilberto Fanilag burned his hair.

Initial investigation conducted by the arson investigator showed that Fanilag was having the gasoline tank of his taxi cab repaired for leaks when the fire began at 8:29 a.m. "An electronic spark may have come into contact with gasoline fumes and ignited the fire," Tana said in an interview.

Tana said that Benosa, who was inspecting the taxi cab when the fire began, ran to the back of the garage where he suffocated to death. Fanilag, on the other hand, was able to run outside, and suffered only minor injuries.

The fire, which quickly reached the fifth alarm before it was put out at 8:57 a.m., razed the second and third floors of the shop which served as the owners' home.

Tana added that three taxi cabs inside the garage at the time the fire broke out were also damaged.

Motorcycle mishap claims lives of couple

By Julie M. Aurelio

A MAN AND HIS WIFE WERE killed after their motorcycle slammed into a truck on Roxas Boulevard on Saturday morning.

Mark Arthur and Editha de Villa died while undergoing treatment at the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Pasay City. The couple were residents of Pulang Lupa in Las Piñas City.

Police said that at around 1:20 a.m. Saturday, a Mitsubishi-Fuso Canter truck being driven by Larry Añonuevo suddenly stopped on the southbound lane of Roxas Boulevard in Barangay Tambo, Parañaque City.

The De Villas, who were behind the truck in a motorcycle, were unable to stop and crashed into the truck.

Añonuevo is now in police custody. Charges of double homicide and damage to property will be filed against him.

Man on Metro's most wanted list caught

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE CALOOCAN CITY POLICE yesterday announced the arrest of the second most wanted man in Metro Manila.

Caloocan chief of police, Supt. William Macavinta, said a cash reward of P350,000 was being offered for the capture of Larry Perito San Felipe, also known as Jerry Lumasog, a resident of Bagong Silang, Caloocan City.

San Felipe was number two in the Metro Manila police's Order of Battle, he added.

Macavinta said the wanted man was arrested in the vicinity of the Super Ferry terminal at Pier 15, Port Area, Manila last Saturday.

The operation was conducted by local police operatives and members of the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response after weeks of surveillance.

"He was about to board a boat, apparently to hide in the countryside, when he was apprehended," Macavinta said.

A source also said that they discovered the identity of the suspect when they did a background check.

According to Macavinta, San Felipe is wanted for several cases, including kidnapping, robbery in band with homicide and illegal possession of firearms.

"The suspect is also being eyed as a suspect in a grenade-throwing incident during a wake last year that killed three people and wounded 21 others," the source added.

San Felipe was reportedly tagged by some witnesses and victims who identified him as one of the three men seen at the wake of Celerino Galarce, father of Charles last November.

The three walked up to the house where the wake was being hurled, threw a grenade and then walked away.

Charles is one of the witnesses in the case of Ralph Ruñez, a camera man of television network RPN-9, who was robbed and shot dead in July 2006.

He was supposed to go to his father's wake on the night the grenade-hurling incident occurred but the police stopped him.

San Felipe is detained at the Pacer headquarters in Camp Crame.

METROBRIEFS

Missing cash

THERE were no signs of forcible entry but when employees opened the gasoline station in Pasig City yesterday morning, the sack containing P142,000 in cash was already gone. PO1 Clifford Hipolito said one of the cashiers discovered the theft when she opened the office of the Eastern Petroleum Gasoline Station in Barangay Kalawaan at about 6 a.m. yesterday. The station, owned by 52-year-old Fernando Martinez, was closed at 10 p.m. Sunday, leaving Hipolito and other investigators to believe the theft was carried out at dawn yesterday. The missing cash was the station's earnings for the weekend, Hipolito added.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

UE Caloocan Week

THE UNIVERSITY of the East-Caloocan will celebrate the 53rd UE-Caloocan Week on Feb. 14 to 21 with the theme, "Taking a Big Leap Toward Excellence and Recognition." Among the activities are career orientation, a campus tour for senior high school students, forums, sports fest, quiz shows, exhibits, job fair, film showing, concerts, stage plays and a beauty pageant. Free college entrance tests will also be given during the entire UE-Caloocan Week. For more information, please contact 3633813, 3674787 and 3612398 or log on to www.ue.edu.ph.

Seniors protest drug firm decision

By Jocelyn R. Uy

AROUND 80 SENIOR CITIZENS YESTERDAY held a prayer rally in front of the Makati Hall of Justice where a giant pharmaceutical company has filed a patent suit against the government.

Pfizer's decision to push through with the case to stop the government from importing Norvasc, an antihypertensive drug, from India, has caused her blood pressure to shoot up, Gloria Ganata, 67, a member of the Cut the Cost, Cut the Pain Network (3CPNet), told the INQUIRER.

"I hope they will take pity on us because we cannot afford very expensive medicines," said Ganata, who added that she takes the drug to keep her blood pressure at a normal level.

Her sister also needs to take the medicine daily, she said.

Pfizer sells Norvasc at P44.75 per 5 mg tablet. The 10 mg tablet, on the other hand, is priced at P74.50 each.

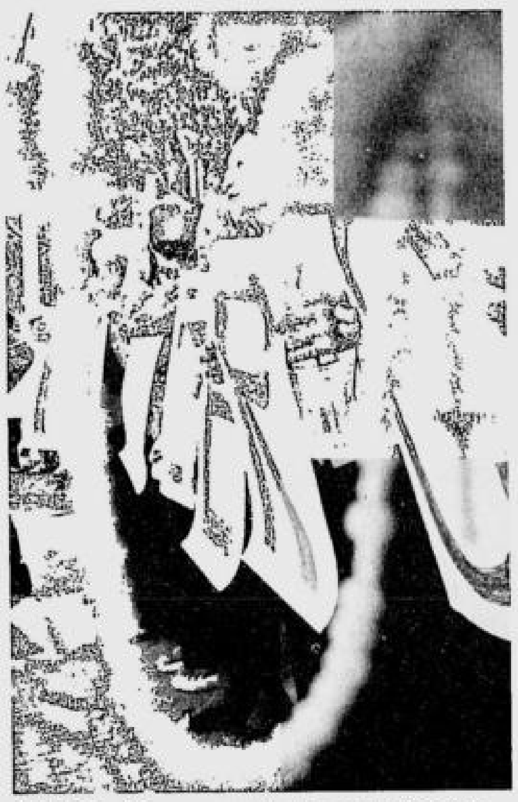
The same drug, however, which is sold in India under the brand name Amlogard, sells only at P6 for the 5 mg tablet and P9 for the 10 mg tablet, according to Oxfam, an international relief and development organization involved in the fight against poverty.

Pfizer sued the Philippine International Trading Corp. (PTIC) and the Bureau of Food and Drug (BFAD) for importing samples of the drug from India which have been submitted for registration to BFAD.

The government plans to start looking for a similar drug that can immediately enter the market when the Pfizer-controlled patent expires in June this year.

"The foreign pharmaceutical companies have resorted to filing court cases and other bullying tactics every time their commercial and profit interests are threatened by public health safeguards," Oxfam spokesperson Shalimar Vitan said in a statement.

Members of Oxfam and the Coalition for Older Persons' Associations of the Philippines were also in attendance yesterday. The ralliers, meanwhile, urged Judge Cesar Untalan of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 149 to junk the case filed by Pfizer.



SENIOR citizens pray for the entry into the country of cheaper-priced medicine during a rally yesterday in Makati City. RYAN LIM

They fashioned out a rosary made of red and white balloons which they later released into the sky. The prayer rally coincided with the resumption of the court hearings on the case which was filed by Pfizer in January 2006.

However, the hearing was adjourned after Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan, head of PTIC, failed to show up on time for cross-examination.

Pfizer's lawyers asked Untalan to reset the hearing to Feb. 15.

'60s idol Cliff Richard back for concert

BRITISH singer Cliff Richard (right) is back in the country for a Valentine concert. JESS YUSON

By Tarra Quismundo

RETURNING AFTER MORE THAN 20 years, British recording artist Cliff Richard arrived in Manila yesterday afternoon for his pre-Valentine concert at the Araneta Coliseum tonight.

Richard, the voice behind pop hits "Ocean Deep" and "Summer Holiday," arrived with a 24-man entourage, including his 10-piece band, on board Philippine Airlines flight PR 504 from Singapore.

Local rocker RJ Jacinto and concert producers welcomed Richard at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Centennial Terminal, where the singer obligingly signed autographs and posed for pictures with some airport staff.

Richard is here for the Manila stop of his "Here and Now Tour 2007," which began at the Wembley Arena in London on Nov. 4, 2006.

The tour includes stops in South Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Richard's last visit to Manila was in 1984.

DID YOU KNOW

ON FEB. 13, 1998, exactly nine years ago, Parañaque became a city by virtue of Republic Act 8507. The city has a population of roughly 450,000 living in an area which covers almost 5,000 hectares. Parañaque was called Palanyag when it was founded as a town in 1572. With the coming of American rule, Parañaque was one of the first towns to have a municipal government. It was also one of the first municipalities to be liberated from Japanese forces at the close of World War II.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

GMA's pride cause of her temper outburst

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

WANTED: WOMAN WITH BULLdog, temper—INQUIRER headline, inside page, Feb. 10 issue.

No, the headline was not referring to President Macapagal-Arroyo, although many citizens no longer want her at the top.

Ms Arroyo's temper tantrums are not doing her any good. And that's putting it mildly.

People are turned off by a spectacle of their President hitting the ceiling and humiliating her subordinates and reporters in public. They look at her as arrogant and overbearing.

The presidential outburst in public last week alienated some more people who read about it. The cause of Ms Arroyo's temper tantrum was a question on the state of the economy posed by an INQUIRER reporter.

Apparently, she couldn't answer the question straight, so she resorted to what she's known or notorious for: Showing her fangs.

Pride makes the President act the way she does in public when she feels embarrassed by a comment or question.

One wonders how she treated her intelligent students of economics at the Ateneo who asked very difficult questions.

Did she show her superiority by getting irritated at the "impertinent" question?

She's not the only Chief Executive whose pride is as big as Malacañang Palace.

Her predecessor, Joseph "Erap" Estrada, once put down an adviser with a dismissive, *"Bakit, Presidente ka ba? Maging Pangulo ka muna bago ka magbigay ng ganoong payo"* (Why, are you the President? You should get yourself elected president first before you give me that advice)."

It's very hard to be humble when one is in power.

But the decline of a leader starts when power gets to his head.

* * *

Senate President Manny Villar and his wife, Rep. Cynthia Villar, were prevented by police guards from entering ousted President Erap's Tanay, Rizal estate when they dropped in for a visit.

The Villars were told there was a plot by the communist rebels to kill the detained former leader.

***Susmaryosep!* Did the police guards think the Senate President and his congresswoman-wife were possible assassins?**

But that was only an excuse to make it hard for members of the opposition to meet with one another and plot their election strategy.

Of course, the order came from the Palace! Where else?

With Director General Oscar Calderon, the President's relative, at the helm of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Malacanang's order will be followed to the letter.

* * *

The story of Philippine Tourism Authority General Manager Robert Dean Barbers that he and his family were targets of a foiled kidnap attempt in Batangas taxes one's credulity.

If there really was a kidnap plot, then they were very lucky indeed because their would-be kidnappers were either stupid or plain cowards.

If the people that the young Barbers said were out to kidnap him and his family were really kidnappers, they would have grabbed the chance when he alighted from his vehicle.

They would have gone out from their vehicle simultaneously with guns in hand, or their companions in a back-up car would have gone behind Barbers while his attention was riveted on the people inside the car in front of him.

Witnesses said it was Barbers who first got out of his car and confronted the men in the other car. It was Barbers, according to witnesses, who poked his gun at the occupants of the other car.

It looked like it was a traffic incident involving Barbers and the occupants of the other car.

Nuke talks hang; breakthrough up to North Korea, envoys say

BEIJING—ENVOYS TO TALKS on North Korea's nuclear program said the possibility of a breakthrough rested solely with Pyongyang, as negotiations entered their final scheduled day Monday with dim hope for progress.

Over the previous four days, the six-country talks in Beijing have stalled over disagreements on energy assistance for the North in exchange for its abandonment of nuclear weapons.

"It is up to the North Koreans. We have put everything on the table. We have offered a way forward on a number of issues. They just need to make a decision," US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill told reporters before Monday's session.

His comments were echoed by Japanese envoy Kenichiro Sasae, whose government has been fiercely critical of North Korea, and South Korean negotiator Chun Yung-woo, whose leaders have often appeared more accommodating.

Reaching an agreement "hangs greatly on the response, or final answer, that North Korea brings today," Sasae said.

The current round of six-nation talks began on a promising note after the United States and North Korea signaled a willingness to compromise. But negotiations quickly became mired on a single issue—the amount of energy assistance North Korea would be awarded for disarming.

"There is no dissent among the chief delegates that we need to draw a conclusion, an outcome, today," said South Korea's Chun.

Host China, seeking a last-minute deal, met separately with the North Korean and US delegations Monday morning before the Americans and North Koreans were set to hold one-on-one talks.

But Pyongyang was giving few signs it would compromise, a South Korean official said Monday afternoon. "North Korea's position is still not within a range acceptable to us," the official said on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing diplomacy.

Adding pressure on the delegates was a sense that failure to reach an agreement this time could permanently doom the talks.

The negotiations—which include the two Koreas, the US, Japan, China and Russia—have plodded on intermittently for more than three years.

Washington and Tokyo, in particular, have questioned the usefulness of continuing without results.

"There's a certain life cycle to these negotiations," Hill said Monday. If North Korea rejects the current proposal, the American diplomat speculated that there would "be some political climate change, if not in the US, then maybe among some other countries."

But he added, "I don't want to predict that this is the last chance."

Negotiators had hoped the latest round would result in North Korea taking its first concrete steps in dismantling its nuclear program, an issue that became especially critical after the North conducted its first nuclear test explosion in October.

South Korean and Japanese media reports gave varying accounts of how much energy North Korea was demanding, from 2 million kilowatts of electricity to 2 million tons of heavy fuel oil. *AP*

NORTH Korean soldiers rest against a tree on the bank of the Yalu River near the North Korean town of Sinuiju Feb. 12. Talks on the future of North Korea's nuclear arms program entered a fifth day on Monday with negotiators scrambling for progress. REUTERS

Socialist Royal unveils 100 ideas 'to make France strong'

VILLEPINTE, FRANCE—SOCIALIST candidate Segolene Royal revived her flagging presidential campaign on Sunday, unveiling 100 proposals she said would make France a stronger, fairer place.

The policies were drawn up following 6,000 nationwide debates and focused on economic, social and environmental issues, pushing Royal to the left of the political spectrum.

"I feel today that I am in a position to offer you something more than a program. It is a pact of honor, a presidential pact that I propose to you all," Royal said during a two-hour speech to 15,000 flag-waving, cheering supporters.

Her pact contained promises to boost small pensions by 5 percent, to consolidate the 35-hour work week, to lift the minimum wage to 1,500 euros ($1,949) from 1,254 euros and establish a military-style boot camp for young offenders.

She also included controversial plans to set up "citizen juries" to evaluate the work of parliamentarians, and pledged to reduce class sizes, hit big-earning oil companies with a special levy and make it harder for firms to shift production abroad.

Royal, 53, won her party's nomination in November and appeared on course to become France's first woman president, but has since fallen behind her rightist rival Nicolas Sarkozy, hit by a string of gaffes and signs of internal party dissent. *Reuters*

FRENCH Socialist Party presidential candidate Segolene Royal at a political rally Feb. 11. REUTERS

Putin is latest to raise tensions at Munich meeting

MUNICH, GERMANY—RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin has helped cement a new tradition by using an annual conference in Munich to dispense with diplomatic reserve and pick a fight.

He used this year's high-profile security get-together in Germany to accuse the United States of sparking a new arms race by trying to become the world's "one single master," a speech one US senator said smacked of Cold War rhetoric.

This is not the first time that the diplomatic gloves have been removed at this gathering of the world's top defense and security officials in the Bavarian state capital, known for its beer halls, baroque architecture and checkered history.

Last year German Chancellor Angela Merkel likened Iran's nuclear plans—which the West suspects aims to build the bomb—to the threat posed by the Nazis in their early days.

And in 2003, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer declared he did not believe the US case for invading Iraq, which it did a month later—just after US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had presented that case at the podium.

"I am not convinced. That is my problem. I cannot go to the public and say these are the reasons because I don't believe in them," Fischer said, his forthright comments contributing to a long-lasting souring of US-German relations.

"People like to pick fights at the Munich conference and maybe Putin wanted to launch a new Cold War at this one," a senior European official said of the meeting first held in 1962.

He said one reason was that participants were so high-level—presidents, prime ministers and other top officials—that they weren't afraid to say what's on their mind.

The Kremlin has been hinting for weeks that Putin, who steps down next year, was preparing a major speech to point the way for future Russian foreign policy.

Tensions in Russian-US relations were obvious at the forum. The editor of weekly German newspaper Die Zeit said he worried that the wrong kind of history may have been made at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy.

"I do hope historians in future don't say another world war broke out here," Josef Joffe said. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Newer breast cancer drugs save lives, study finds

WASHINGTON—Women who switch from the breast cancer pill tamoxifen to a newer class of drugs called aromatase inhibitors live longer, Italian researchers reported on Monday. Their study, published in the journal Cancer, adds to a growing body of evidence that the new drugs are far safer, preventing cancer with fewer side effects than tamoxifen. Dr. Lauren Cassell of Lenox Hill Hospital in New York said the research is changing how doctors treat breast cancer patients after their tumors are surgically removed. "If they have been on tamoxifen we are switching them to an aromatase inhibitor. If they are newly diagnosed we are using an aromatase inhibitor instead of tamoxifen," she said in a statement. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among US women, after lung cancer. More than 200,000 people are diagnosed and another roughly 40,000 die from it each year, according to the American Cancer Society. *Reuters*

Israel testfires antimissile system in 'message' to Iran

JERUSALEM—Israel carried out a successful night-time test of its Hetz (Arrow) antimissile system Sunday in what public television described as a "message to Iran." The defense ministry confirmed the test-firing, the first since December 2005 when the military announced the system was fully operational. "This test-firing was aimed at checking the functioning of the Hetz at night and in extreme conditions against a ballistic missile," a ministry statement said. "All the system's components worked perfectly." *AFP*

Jerusalem mayor suspends renovations near mosque

JERUSALEM—The mayor of Jerusalem has decided to suspend renovations near the revered Al-Aqsa mosque compound in the city's Old Town that have sparked violent clashes between Palestinian protestors and police, Israeli military radio reported. Mayor Uri Lupolianski announced late Sunday the suspension of repair work to a damaged stone ramp leading to the mosque that has angered Muslims across the world and which the Arab League on Saturday called a "criminal attack." More than 2,000 Israeli police had been deployed to step up security around the compound—known to Muslims as Haram al-Sharif or Noble Sanctuary, and to Jews as Temple Mount—after two days of violent clashes in which dozens were wounded in Jerusalem and parts of the occupied West Bank. Israeli police have denied access to Muslim men under 45 and Palestinians from the West Bank to the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, Islam's third-holiest shrine. *AFP*

Portugal to legalize abortion

LISBON—Portugal's Prime Minister Jose Socrates vowed Sunday to legalize abortion after voters backed the move in a referendum even though turnout was not high enough to make it binding. Nearly 60 percent of those who cast ballots in the predominantly Roman Catholic country approved a government proposal to give all women the right to an abortion up to the 10th week of pregnancy, according to official final results. Socrates pledged his Socialist government will now use its parliamentary majority to legalize abortion. Abortion is currently allowed in Portugal only in cases of rape, a malformed fetus or if the woman's well-being is in danger. Within the 27-nation European Union only Ireland, Malta and Poland have abortion laws that are similar or even more restrictive. *AFP*

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

Name and address of Company-Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
EMIRATES AIRLINES 18/F, Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., cor. Makati Avenue, Makati City	Wayne Brian Levey	Licensed Aircraft Engineer
MANPOWER OUTSOURCING SERVICES, INC. 19/F PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Avenue cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City	Osamu Miyama	Japanese Support Engineer
LG 25 FOODSTORE, INC. 26 Timog Ave., cor. Sct. Tobias, Quezon City	Hyung Il Choi	Marketing Manager
AUST-PHILS. ALUMINUM INTERNATIONAL, INC. 530 J. Rizal St., cor. Ilino Cruz St., Brgy. Vergara, Mandaluyong City	Chi Wai Lui	General Manager and Chief Executive Officer
MANPOWER OUTSOURCING SERVICES, INC. 19/F PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Avenue cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City	Shinichi Hirano	Operations Team Lead – Japan
NIPPON HOUSING PHILIPPINES, INC. Unit 404-405, Lao Center, 1000 Pasay Road cor. Makati Ave., Makati City	Yoshimi Komori	Member of the Board of Directors
BRITISH EMBASSY 15 & 17 Flrs., L.V. Locsin Bldg., 6752 Ayala Ave., Makati City	James Alexander Stacey	Visa Validator
CARENETT_PHILIPPINES INC. 15 Scout Bayoran, South Triangle, Quezon City	Boonchai Limtongmadee	Core Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Takahiro Nishio	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Tamotsu Takahashi	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Akio Asaba	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Hiroaki Iizuka	Assistant Engineering Manager
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Tokio Kobayashi	Instrument Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Yoshikuni Shida	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Naoyuki Kamada	Lead Electrical Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Naohiro Yoshimoto	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Ichiro Takahashi	Civil Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Takami Kanai	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Mitsuhiro Wada	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Hajime Kuwahara	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA ROHQ JGC Bldg., 2109 Prime St., Madrigal Bus. Park, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Hiroshi Sagami	Electrical Engineer
KOREA POST INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING CORPORATION #2750 South Ave., Brgy. Sta. Cruz, Makati City	Kisung Chang	Photographer
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THE BEST LEARNING N JOURNEY INC. U2, Kennedy Center, Prime St., Madrigal Business Park 2, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Won Jin Lee	HRD-Manager
HSBC ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING (PHILS.) INC. 5150 North Bridgeway, Northgate Cyberzone, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Casey Ann Carl	Assistant Vice President-Projects and Planning

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

fs
LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI – February 13, 2007)

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

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US says Iran arming Shiites with bombs

BAGHDAD—SOPHISTICATED Iranian-built bombs smuggled into Iraq have killed at least 170 US and allied soldiers since June 2004, senior US defense officials said Sunday, amid ongoing carnage.

The allegation that Iran is backing Shiite extremists came as suspected Sunni insurgents killed more than 30 people, most of them members of the security forces, in a spate of bomb and gun attacks in northern Iraq.

US defense officials presented their evidence at a background briefing in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, after Washington stepped up criticism of Iran.

The allegations will feed a fierce international debate over relations with the Islamic republic, whose nuclear program is already at the center of mounting tension amid reports that America is readying air strikes.

"Iran is involved in supplying explosively formed projectiles or EFPs and other material to Iraqi extremist groups," a senior official from the US-led multinational coalition told journalists.

Three coalition officials met reporters to point the finger at the Al-Qods Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, part of Tehran's elite forces accused of links with foreign militants.

"The Qods Force arms extremists and insurgents to carry out terrorist attacks and guerrilla warfare," he said. "The Qods Force provides advice, training and weapons to proxy forces in Iraq."

The men spoke on condition of anonymity for their security and cameras and recording devices were barred from the briefing, where an array of mortar shells and booby traps were laid out for inspection.

Reporters were issued with a disc containing photographs of alleged Iranian weapons seized in Iraq—a Misagh-1 ground-to-air missile, EFPs and mortar shells—showing manufacturing dates in late 2006.

A senior defense analyst said US-led forces had evidence that Iran had stepped up shipments of EFPs, factory-built explosives designed to cut through armor, to armed Iraqi Shiite groups.

He said five Iranians arrested in January in the northern Iraqi city of Arbil were Al-Qods force officers who had no diplomatic cover and had tried to flush documents down a toilet as they were arrested.

"We assess that these activities are coming from the senior levels of the Iranian government," he said, noting that the Al-Qods brigade reports to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamanei.

The senior official said Iran's involvement was being revealed as a "force protection measure."

"They're pretty devastating," he said of the EFPs, holding up a lump of melted metal that he said had been fired through a US vehicle.

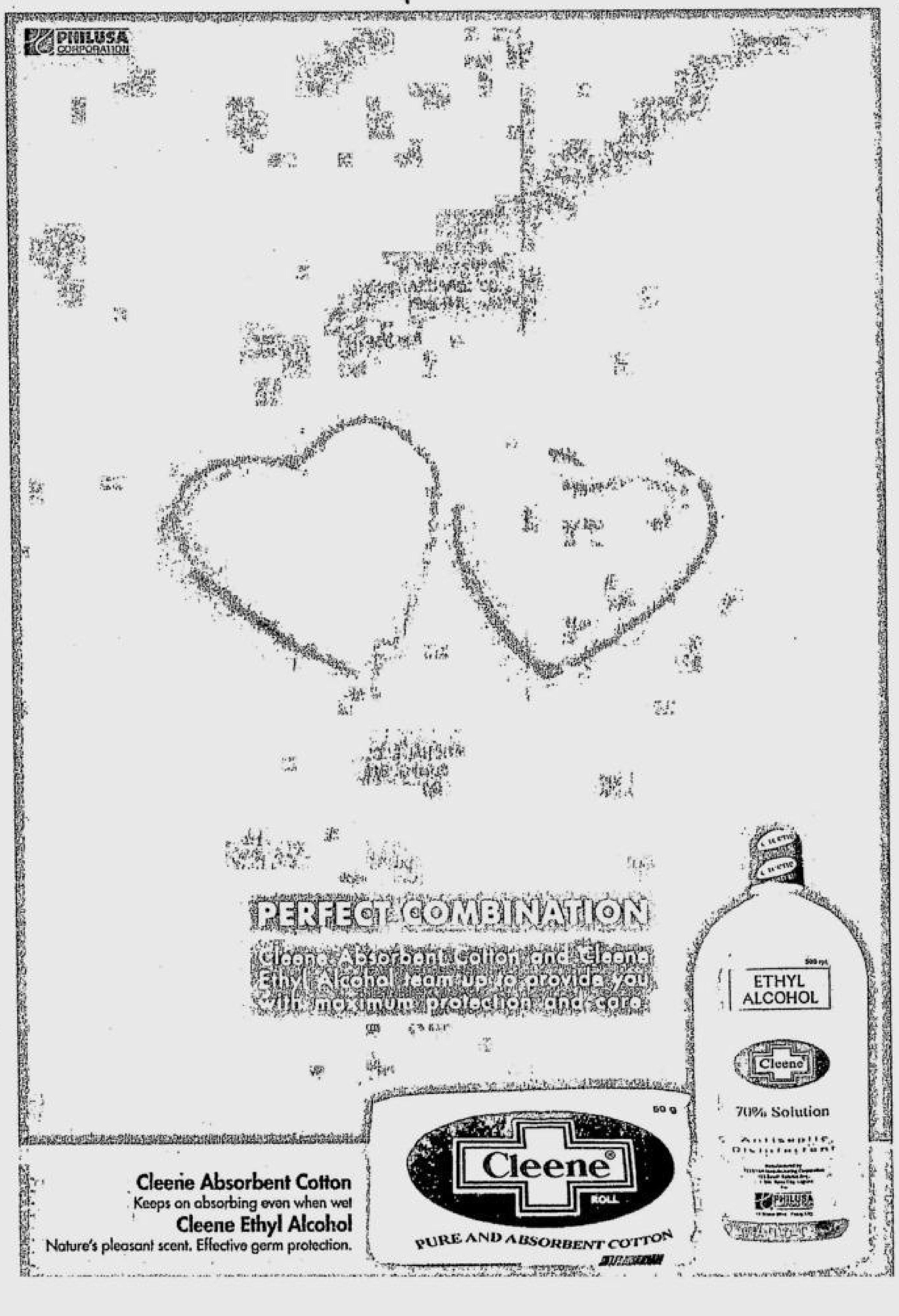
"More than 170 US and coalition troops have been killed by these things, and 620 wounded. There was a significant increase in their use over the past six months," he added.

A total of 3,113 US troops have died in Iraq since the March 2003 invasion, according to an AFP count based on Pentagon figures, with main ally Britain suffering 132 fatalities over the same period.

American and allied troops first encountered Iranian-made EFPs in mid 2004, and since then US commanders have often accused Tehran of fomenting unrest by supplying weapons, cash and training to Iraqi militants.

The device—one of which was shown to reporters by a senior coalition explosives expert—consists of a machined steel tube lined with a metal coating and packed with explosives.

When the charge detonates, the metal coating melts and is forced out at high velocity as a white-hot lump, cutting through the armor plating on the target vehicle. *AFP*



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Harvard names first female president in 371-year history

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS—HARVARD University announced Sunday that a woman is to lead the prestigious US school for the first time in its 371-year history.

Drew Gilpin Faust, a 59-year-old US Civil War scholar, was named the next president of the United States' oldest university during a special meeting of a school governing body Sunday, Harvard said in a statement.

Faust succeeds former US treasury secretary Lawrence Summers, who resigned last year after a series of public disputes and behind-the-scenes battles with faculty members.

Faust has served as an administrator at Harvard since 2001, when she became head of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

Prior to joining Harvard, she spent her academic career at the University of Pennsylvania, rising through the professorial ranks after receiving her doctorate there in 1975.

Her confirmation as presidenr was widely expected after local newspapers reported last week that she was the final choice of a selection committee designed to find a permanent replacement for Summers.

Harvard is the latest elite US university to appoint a woman to the top job, following Princeton, Brown, MIT and the University of Pennsylvania. Faust said it would be wrong not to acknowledge the significance of her gender, but urged people not to dwell on it.

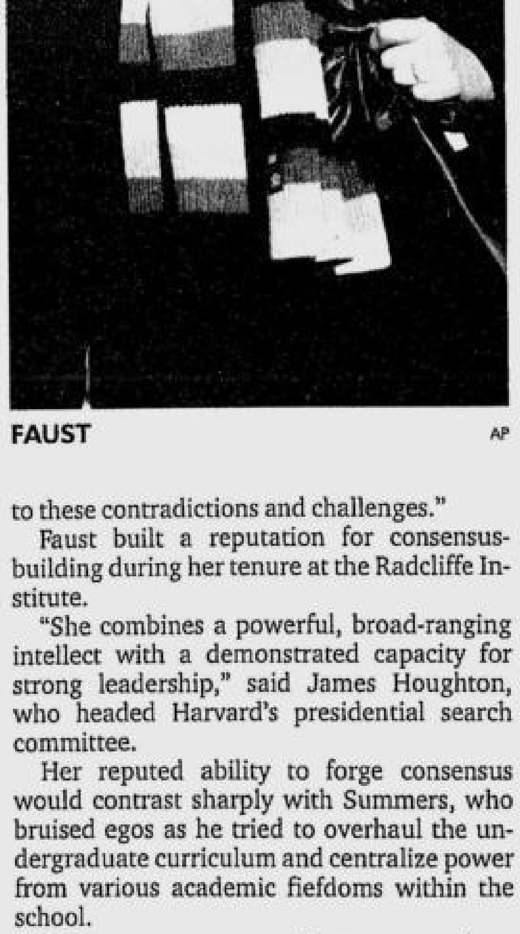
"I'm not the woman president of Harvard. I'm the president of Harvard," she told a news conference shortly after her appointment was announced.

Faust, saying she was grateful for the trust placed in her by the university's governing boards, spoke of the task ahead of her.

She indicated she sees her new job not just as leading Harvard but also championing the cause of higher education in the United States, which she noted is often hailed as world-class but also criticized as badly managed and self-indulgent.

"We find ourselves wondering in 2007 whether we—at Harvard or at any other university—have the resources, the organizational capacity, the relentlessness, and the leadership to generate continuing excellence," she said.

"What Harvard does in this next decade will serve as an important part of the answer to these contradictions and challenges."



FAUST AP

Faust built a reputation for consensus-building during her tenure at the Radcliffe Institute.

"She combines a powerful, broad-ranging intellect with a demonstrated capacity for strong leadership," said James Houghton, who headed Harvard's presidential search committee.

Her reputed ability to forge consensus would contrast sharply with Summers, who bruised egos as he tried to overhaul the undergraduate curriculum and centralize power from various academic fiefdoms within the school.

Summers was never able to recover from the 2005 uproar that followed his remark that intrinsic differences between the sexes may help explain why fewer women lead in science and math fields. *AFP*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Mickelson cruises to 5-shot win /A25

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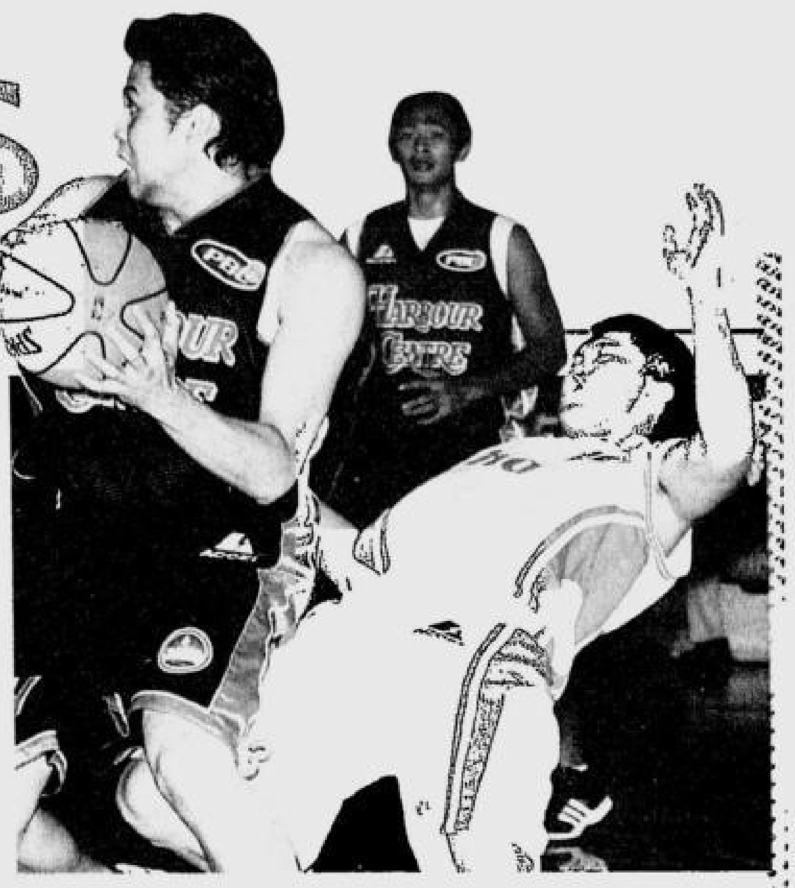
Hapee, Harbour title showdown gets going



JAN Anthony Coching (left) of Harbour Centre and Ronald Bucao of Hapee-PCU will again pit skills today at the start of the PBL Silver Cup championship series. RUDY ESPERAS

AFTER TAKING DIVERGENT PATHS TO THE finals, Hapee-PCU and Harbour Centre start their best-of-five series for the PBL Silver Cup championship today at the Olivarez College Sports Center in Parañaque.

GAMES TODAY
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.— Toyota Otis vs Mail and More
4 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Harbour Centre

The Teeth Masters, the tournament's hottest team at the outset, are slight favorites when they collide at 4 p.m. with the Port Masters, who picked up steam only late in the classification round and needed a winner-take-all win over Toyota Otis last Saturday to reach this far.

The Toyota Otis Sparks and the Mail and More Comets tangle at 2 p.m. for third place.

Hapee made it to the finals first, ousting Mail and More, 3-1, in their best-of-five semifinal series to underscore its strength. The Teeth Masters also made it to the semifinals outright.

But Harbour Centre, which is actually shooting for a second straight championship, will be riding the momentum of a thrilling semifinal win marked by the steady games of team star JC Intal and Chico Lanete.

The Teeth Masters will again rely on the solid triumvirate of Jason Castro, Mark Borboran and Larry Rodriguez, whose performance worries Harbour Centre coach Jorge Gallent.

"They've become more dangerous and have been playing their best basketball since the semis," Gallent said.

But the Port Masters have likewise been drawing a lot of help from their supporting cast led by Jonathan Fernandez, Edwin Asoro, Ryan Araña and Allan Gamboa.

"It will be important for us to continue playing aggressive defense," said Hapee-PCU coach Jun Noel, who also expects key contributions from Ronald Bucao, Beau Belga and Robert Sanz.

Lanete has become a mark man after the veteran guard caught fire in Harbour Centre's semifinal series versus Toyota Otis with a 17.6- point norm, nearly double his 9.7 average in the eliminations.

"If Chico plays well, everyone just plays well," said Gallent.

Gallent, however, points out that the Teeth Masters seem to have more perimeter threats with their big men also having the propensity to shoot from beyond the arc.

"They have fast, big men," he said. "Execution will be the most important thing for us."

Harbour Centre and Hapee-PCU split their two meetings in the elimination round. The Teeth Masters claimed the first encounter with a 73-68 victory, with Intal still out of the fray for Harbour Centre.

The Port Masters scored a payback win two months later, 75-67, with Intal and Fernandez leading the charge. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Chess body summons suspected game-fixers

By Marlon Bernardino
Contributor

TEN PLAYERS SUSPECTED OF involvement in game-fixing scams have been summoned by National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr. to present their sides today.

After hearing them out, the NCFP board will deliberate on the report of the fact-finding committee formed by Pichay to investigate the networking scandal that has rocked the local chess community.

"Let's not name the accused players," said Pichay. "Anyway the public will know their identities tomorrow (today) because they will defend themselves before the fact-finding committee."

The investigating team, led by NCFP directors lawyer Edmundo Legaspi and former Benguet governor Raul Molintas, will meet with the 10 players at Mario's Restaurant in Quezon City.

According to NCFP tournament chair Willie Abalos, also a member of the fact-finding team, each player will be given a chance to defend himself.

"The fact-finding committee had already submitted to the board all the evidence it gathered," said Abalos. "The only thing lacking is the side of the

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Jawo ready for coaching comeback

JAWORSKI

ROBERT JAWORSKI, WHO rode his basketball popularity to a seat in the Philippine Senate, will soon return to the scene of his countless exploits in the past as head coach of one of the most exciting teams in the Philippine Basketball Association.

Pasig Rep. Robert "Dodot" Jaworski Jr., the former senator's son and namesake, yesterday said his father, popularly known as the "Living Legend" of Philippine basketball, is being courted by at least two teams—Air21 and Talk 'N Text—for a celebrated comeback in the pro league.

Dodot added in the interview with Pasig reporters that his father has already expressed willingness to return as coach and is now deciding on which team to handle.

"There were offers and he's still thinking which team to coach," said the young Jaworski, who briefly played under his father for the Ginebra franchise in the late 90s.

He said his father would start calling the shots for either Air21 or Talk 'N Text in the import-laced second conference.

"There's always a special place in my father's heart for basketball," said Jaworski Jr. "Let's wait for his decision."

After his retirement in 1999, Jaworski ran for senator and won. Sources said Jaworski is also being considered to serve as executive director of the BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas, the unified body of the sport in the country.

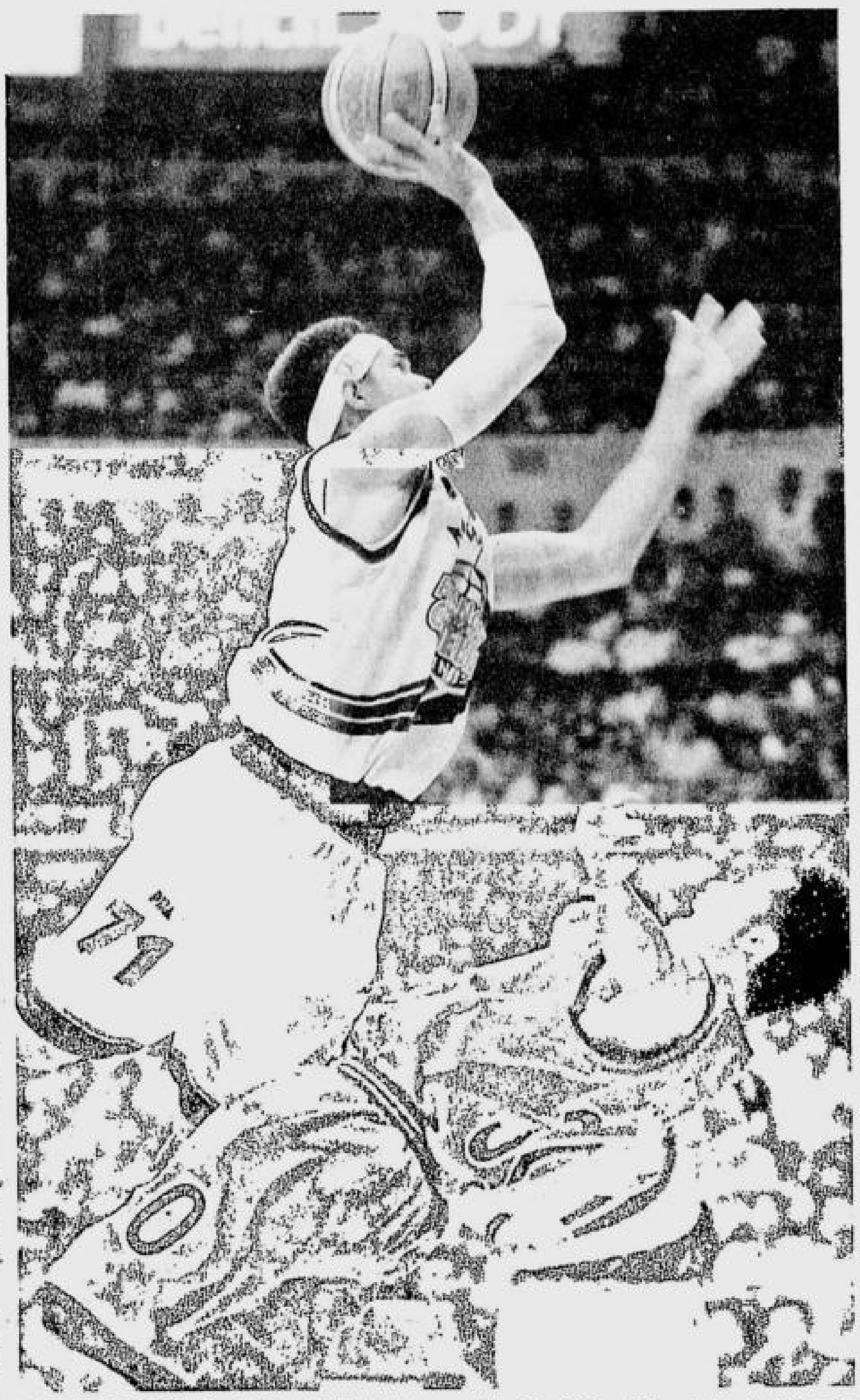
As playing coach in the pro league, Jaworski captured four championships, the last the 1997 Commissioner's Cup for Gordon's Gin. He also mentored the all-PBA national team to a silver-medal finish in the 1990 Asian Games.

Winner of the MVP award in 1978 while playing for Toyota, Jaworski won his first championship as a playing coach in the 1986 Open Conference, when his Ginebra squad defeated Manila Beer in the Finals.

Jaworski was also the architect of one of the greatest comebacks in PBA Finals history after Ginebra rose from a 1-3 deficit to turn back Shell Velocity in Game 7 of the 1991 First Conference finals.

In 24 seasons in the PBA, the 60-year-old Jaworski, a six-time Mythical team member, played a total of 958 games, with career averages of 12.3 points, 5.6 rebounds, 6.1 assists and a steal per game.

With a report from June Navarro


BARANGAY Ginebra's Ronald Tubid barges into San Miguel Beer's Lordy Tugade in Game 2. Tubid was called for an offensive foul. INQUIRER PHOTO/ RYAN LIM

Young Atienza gives up Palace sports post

ATIENZA

ARNOLD "ALI" ATIENZA has stepped down as Presidential Assistant for Youth and Sports to concentrate on his position as chair of both the Manila Sports Council (Masco) and city hall's Inner City Development Committee.

The decision was in response to an appeal from socio-civic youth organizations in Manila for the son of Mayor Lito Atienza to help sustain the gains made by city hall's sports arm, and the Inner City group.

"I would like to thank the President (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) for giving me the opportunity to serve our country in my own humble way during my brief stint as Presidential Assistant for Youth and Sports," said Atienza.

The Alliance of Manila Youth Organizations (Amyo)—the umbrella organization of more than 300 youth groups in Manila led by Jason Valencia and Ryan Ponce—urged Atienza to continue setting the direction of Manila's youth through sports and social advancement.

As Presidential Assistant, Atienza conceived and implemented the Recruitment, Identification, Training and Exposure in Sports (Rites) program which shares the benefits of the highly successful Manila Youth Games (MY Games) with other local government units.

Chess body summons . . .

From page A23

PICHAY

(players)."

"If the board decides that we have a case, it might decide on it (the penalty) right away," Abalos added.

Other members of the probe team are International Master Jayson Gonzales, National Masters Elias Lao and Cesar Caturla and national arbiters Patrick Lee and Ilann Perez.

At its last meeting on Feb. 1, the NCFP board decided to defer its decision on the controversy, citing the need to thoroughly evaluate the case.

Abalos said they had asked two other IMs to appear before the investigating team along with the eight players earlier tagged as suspects. He declined to identify the IMs.

Pichay said the investigating body would be "fair and just to all concerned."

Gin Kings hurting without Menk

UICHICO

By June Navarro

GAME WEDNESDAY
(Cuneta Astrodome)
7 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Barangay Ginebra

BARANGAY GINEBRA WILL NOT ADMIT IT BUT its fate now rests on Eric Menk's condition.

The Ginebra slotman was the missing factor for the Gin Kings in Game 1 and he saw limited action in Game 2—which coach Jong Uichico said were enough reasons why the Kings are in a 0-2 hole against sister team San Miguel Beer in the ongoing best-of-seven Finals of the PBA Philippine Cup.

Going by the results of the first two games, the Gin Kings are slowly picking up steam as the series progressed, and so is Menk.

Without the 2005 Most Valuable Player, the Gin Kings got bamboozled by the San Miguel Beermen in the series opener, 118-94. Game 2, however, was an entirely different story.

Though benched for most of the game, Menk had unparallel contributions for the Gin Kings on the floor after missing the last seven games since the semifinals with Talk 'N Text due to an injury.

"If he (Menk) could play (in Game 3) it will be a big help for us," said Uichico after the Gin Kings gave the Beermen a scare before yielding, 104-101, in Game 2.

More minutes for the 6-foot-6 banger in Game 3 would mean a tougher matchup for the San Miguel frontline.

In Menk's absence, Rudy Hatfield, Rafi Reavis and Billy Mamaril were overwhelmed by the collective efforts of Dorian Peña, Gabby Espinas, Willy Wilson and Rommel Adducul in the slot.

"Game 3 is a must-win for us. If we can win it, it's just a one-game deficit," said Uichico. "We need to be more aggressive in defense and improve on our shooting."

The Kings, who have never won against the Beermen in their past two Finals meetings, must take Uichico's words to heart. With or without Eric Menk.

UE, Ateneo fencers bag titles; FEU nails 2 volley finals slots

By Jasmine W. Payo

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST EFFECTively worked behind a small nine-player roster to capture its second straight UAAP men's fencing championship over the weekend at the Blue Eagle gym.

Bonifacio Jacintos emerged Most Valuable Player as he powered the UE fencers to a 2-2-2 gold-silver-bronze medal tally at the end of senior action.

"As the defending champions, the pressure was there," admitted UE coach Rolando Canlas. "We trained hard even if we didn't have a complete lineup. Some of our fencers competed in different events even if it wasn't their specialty."

Ateneo's lady fencers, though, dethroned UE while sweeping the individual awards with a 2-1-3 medal haul.

Victoria Grace Garcia bagged the MVP plum after topping the individual foil and leading Ateneo's victorious team foil squad. She was also part of the women's team sabre that placed third.

The Rookie of the Year award went to Maria Lafayette Garcia, who won a gold in team and a silver in individual foil.

Jacintos, 20, a member of the RP junior team, outclassed teammate Don King Decena, 15-9, to bag the gold in the individual sabre. He also nailed a gold in team sabre and a silver in team foil.

Santo Tomas, led by Rookie of the Year Harris Orendain, was runner-up with a 2-1-2 tally in the men's division, with University of the Philippines clinching second in ladies action with 2-1-2.

In women's volleyball, top-seeded Far Eastern claimed the first title berth after trouncing fourth-ranked UE in straight sets, 25-9, 25-18, 25-19, Sunday night at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Mary Ann Manalo paced the Lady Tams with 14 points while rookie Mecailia Morada added 13.

Adamson, with Angela Benting coming up with 14 points, forged a winner-take-all in the other semifinal pairing after stunning second-seeded UST, 25-18, 25-19, 23-25, 25-23.

FEU also claimed the first championship berth in men's volleyball with Jeremey Pedregosa hitting 10 kills and three aces in a 25-20, 25-16, 25-21 triumph over National University.

UST, led by Rene Roque's 17 attacks, forged a do-or-die duel with UP in the other Final Four match with a 25-16, 23-25, 25-19, 25-23 win.

GOLDEN HARVEST: Mainstays of the University of the East men's and women's sabre squads celebrate their twin victories in the UAAP fencing championships at the Blue Eagle Gym in Katipunan. From left, coach Chester Jamer Uy, Bonifacio Jacintos, Erick Brando, Don King Decena, Eloth Alfonso, Baisah Karon, Mark Fermantez, and Maleen Tulin. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education-Division of Cebu Province, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

Division of Cebu Province	Name of Contract	Location	Approved Budget for the Contract	Contract Duration
Lot 1	Supply and Delivery of School Furniture CY 2006	1st District and and 6th District	P 1,659,000.00 P 684,000.00	90 days
Lot 2	Supply and Delivery of School Furniture CY 2006	2nd District	P 3,197,000.00	90 days
Lot 3	Supply and Delivery of School Furniture CY 2006	3rd District	P 2,017,000.00	90 days
Lot 4	Supply and Delivery of School Furniture CY 2006	4th District	P 2,649,000.00	90 days
Lot 5	Supply and Delivery of School Furniture CY 2006	5th District	P 3,061,000.00	90 days

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interests or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183.

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES	DATE/TIME	VENUE
1. Issuance of Bidding documents	February 19, 2007	Cebu Province Division Office
2. Pre-Bid Conference	February 26, 2007 @ 9:00 a.m.	Cebu Province Division Office
3. Submission and Opening of Bids	March 12, 2007 @ 9:00 a.m.	Cebu Province Division Office

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents to bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Three Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 3,500.00)** to the Division Office Cashier.

The Division Office assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The Department of Education-Division of Cebu Province, BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) JUDIANA M. CORRIENTE
BAC Chairman

(PDI - February 13, 2007)

Santillan pulls off points win over Japanese

FORMER ORIENTAL AND PACIFIC BOXING Federation (OPBF) welterweight champion Rev Santillan prevailed by unanimous decision over Japanese Shana Kisaragi in their 10-round non-title fight yesterday at the Archaic Hall in Amagasaki, Hyogo, Japan.

Santillan punished Kisaragi en route to a 98-93, 97-93, 96-94 verdict, paving the way for yet another OPBF title crack for the Filipino.

The bout served as Santillan's final fight tune-up before vying for his old title against reigning champion Taesei Marumoto, whom the Filipino had beaten in the past.

With the win, the Iloilo City-raised Santillan boosted his record to 23-3-1, 16 via KO.

Santillan originally wanted to challenge Marumoto in this card, but the champion's camp reportedly asked that they be allowed one title defense before facing the Filipino.

Rex "Wakee" Salud, who manages Santillan, said he is now arranging his ward's OPBF challenge within this year.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

SPORTSWATCH

3 amateur fights today in Fistorama

FISTORAMA FEATURES THREE EXCITING AMATEUR FIGHTS AT 3 P.M. TOday on RPN-9. Aired every Tuesday, the bouts are part of the PCSO Amateur Boxing Championships held recently at the Cantada Sports Center in Bagumbayan, Taguig City. Fistorama is shown twice weekly through ABS-CBN Global's The Filipino Channel/Pinoy Central. "Golf Power Plus" airs next at 4 p.m. and features the match between St. Jude Team 1 and Lyceum Team 1 in the Women's Inter-Collegiate Beach Volleyball Challenge.

SJC fastest-win event draws 120 entries

AT LEAST 120 ENTRIES ARE VYING IN THE "FASTEST-WIN ONE-COCK Ulutan" presented by the San Juan Coliseum in cooperation with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 this Friday at the San Juan venue. Aside from the guaranteed prize of P100,000, the first 10 winners will also recieve a bonus of P1,000 each. The last three winners will get a 14-inch color TV each, according to hosts Ed Guevarra, Renato Shio and Minda Amoyo. Entry fee is P1,100. Meanwhile, the SJC Cockers 4-Cock Derby series resumes tomorrow, Wednesday, with 70 fights lined up. Official entries must be submitted today.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Silver Eagle/Firehouse (1), Sandok (6), Cast Away/Loaded (7), Valiant Queen (4)

Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Interceptor (1), Shifty (2), Long Hitter/En Gedi (5), Calvin's Magic/Britiney's Magic (8)

Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Rafafox (7), Bullish Dream (3), Arbiter (4), Saving Grace (5), Sakura Ijhay (8)

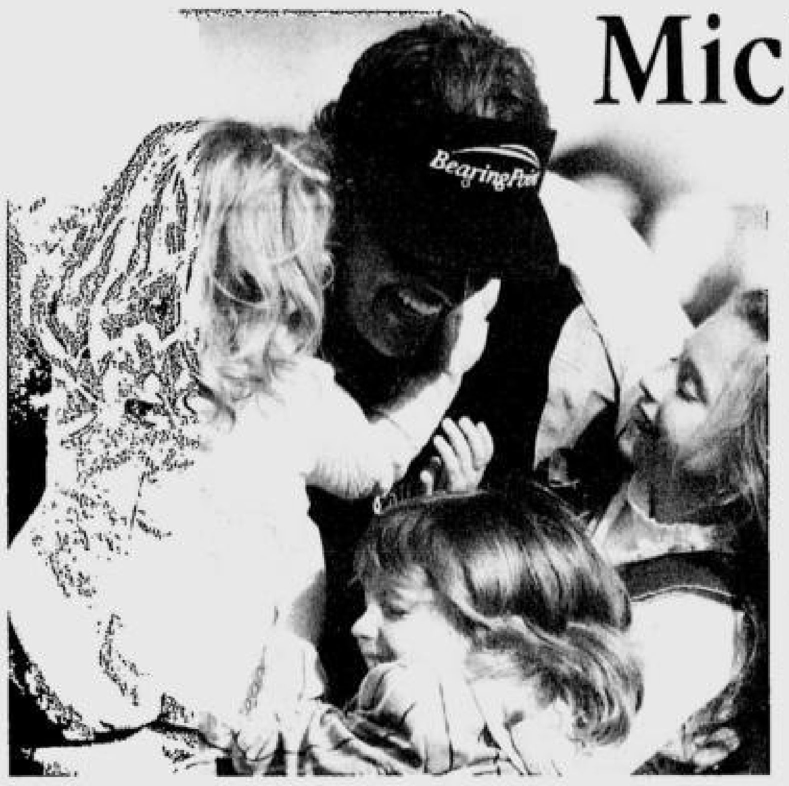
Race 4—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Kambro (9), Ocean Cookie (2), Boss Lady (1), Given (5), Quick Play (8), Terminatol (10)

Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Ilocos Pride (6), Donna Messier (5), Magic Key (1), Angie Gray (2)

Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Tanging Ikaw (7), Beat D'Heat (8), Archer (5), Premiere Act (6), Dulce My Love (1)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Passing Through (8), Grand Fiesta/Bloodline (7), Run Like D'Wind (2), Virgin Hill (6), Ideal Gaze (9)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Gentleman's Lady (11), All Class (4), Master Professor (6), JJ's Friend (10), Canta Libre (9), Danielle's Angel (5)



MICKELSON hugs his daughters Sophia (left) and Amanda and son Evan (center) after holing out victorious at Pebble Beach. AP

Mickelson cruises to 5-shot win

PEBBLE BEACH, CALIFORNIA—PHIL MICKELSON won his first title since a shocking late collapse at last year's US Open, firing eight birdies Sunday to capture the Pebble Beach Pro-Am by a record-tying five shots.

Mickelson won his third Pebble Beach crown and second in three years, firing a six-under par 66 final round to equal a 72-hole tournament record on 20-under par 268 and beat fellow American Kevin Sutherland by a record-matching margin.

"This is exciting. I'm really excited with how I played this week," Mickelson said. "To come out on top and get '07 started off right, it gives me great momentum for the rest of the year." Mickelson, 36, won here in 2005 and also in 1998, although that storm-swamped event had to be finished nearly seven months after it began.

A missed putt and blown lead at last year's US Open cost Mickelson a third major title in a row and spelled doom for his 2006 season.

Mickelson took a five-month break after last year's Ryder Cup and struggled in his first two events this season, sharing 45th at the Bob Hope Classic and 51st at the Buick Invitational.

"I was hoping to play like this the first couple weeks," Mickelson said. "It didn't happen then but I'm glad it finally happened." Mickelson refused to be denied this week, despite a double-bogey at the par-3 fifth hole when his tee shot soared into the woods and was never found.

Mickelson, who had birdied the second and fourth holes, answered with birdies on four of the next six holes to seize the lead.

A bogey at 13 was followed by birdies on three of the last four holes to secure his 30th career victory.

This week, Mickelson shook off the poor putting that had plagued him in his three previous events and stayed in the fairways. He was tied for greens in regulation for the tournament.

"I felt very confident in my iron play," Mickelson said. "I really worked on my putting. Dave Pelz came up and looked at my putting, and I worked very hard at improving it."

Sutherland birdied the 18th to snatch sole possession of second with fellow American John Mallinger third on 274, two strokes ahead of Davis Love and England's Greg Owen.

The margin of victory gave little indication of the difficulty of Mickelson's task on Sunday.

Heavy rains overnight and early Sunday morning necessitated that lift, clean and place be utilized for the fourth consecutive day, but by the time the leaders went off the skies were clear and the wind had died down.

Mickelson began the round tied with Sutherland at 12-under but quickly put distance between himself and Sutherland.

It took longer to dispatch tour rookie Mallinger, who trailed by one shot at the start. Mallinger challenged Mickelson during the front nine and held the lead briefly when he birdied on the sixth hole. He reached the green in two and nearly holed his 76-foot eagle putt, settling for a tap-in birdie. *AFP*

Cavaliers shut down Lakers; Wolves deal Celts' 18th loss

CLEVELAND—SASHA PAVLOVIC scored 13 points in the fourth quarter, picking up the slack for LeBron James, and the Cleveland Cavaliers shut down Kobe Bryant in the final minutes for a 99-90 win over the Los Angeles Lakers on Sunday.

Pavlovic, suddenly a major cog in Cleveland's offense, finished with 21 points, Zydrunas Ilgauskas 17 and Anderson Varejao 12—11 in the fourth—as the Cavaliers improved to 20-7 at home with their second straight solid effort.

James had 18 points, eight rebounds and five assists, but he deferred to Pavlovic and others down the stretch, and Cleveland's supporting cast came through. James was outscored 25-7 by Bryant in the second half, but the All-Star forward got to crown the Cavs' win with a soaring dunk in the final seconds.

Bryant scored 36 points to lead the Lakers, who went 3-5 on an eight-game swing through the bitterly cold East. Bryant scored Los Angeles' first 14 points in the final period, but with Larry Hughes guarding him, he didn't score again in the final 3:39 after making two free throws to tie it 81-all.

At Minneapolis, Ricky Davis' jumper from the corner with 0.2 seconds remaining dealt the Celtics' their franchise-record 18th straight loss, 109-107.

Davis finished with 28 points, Kevin Garnett had 26 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists and another former Celtic, Mark Blount, added 20 points for the Timberwolves.

At Phoenix, Kirk Hinrich scored 14 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter, and Chicago completed a seven-game road trip with a 116-103 victory over the short-handed Suns.

Phoenix played without Steve Nash, the league's two-time defending MVP, for the third consecutive game—the last two of them losses—because of a sore right shoulder. The Suns also didn't have starter Boris Diaw because of back spasms.

At Miami, Dwyane Wade scored 18 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter and the Heat held San Antonio without a field goal for more than seven minutes down the stretch to prevail, 100-85.

Wade hit seven of 10 field goals in the final period, had several blocks against Tony Parker and added seven assists as Miami beat San Antonio for the second time since Feb. 1, 2002.

At Indianapolis, Jermaine O'Neal scored 21 points and set an Indiana franchise record for career blocked shots as the Pacers ripped the LA Clippers, 94-80.

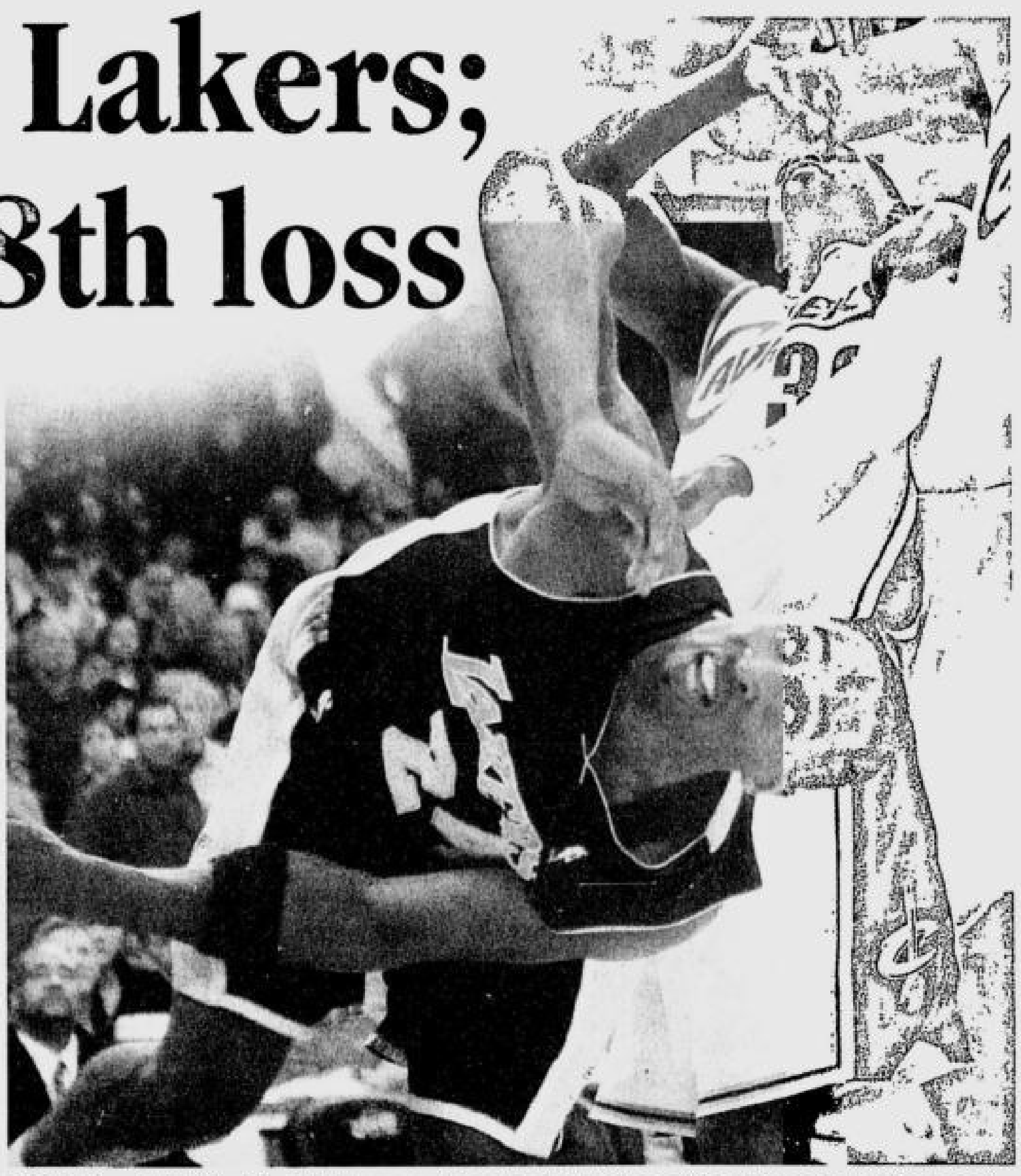
The Pacers took control with a 16-0 run at the end of the second quarter and built their lead to 23 points early in the third period.

At Washington, Jarrett Jack and LaMarcus Aldridge scored 18 points apiece and the Portland Trail Blazers held Gilbert Arenas to nine points en route to a 94-73 thumping of the Wizards.

At Sacramento, California, Ray Allen scored 25 points and hit a key 3-pointer late in the fourth quarter to help Seattle win its second straight road game, 114-103, following a franchise-record 15-game skid away from home.

At Oakland, California, Josh Smith scored 11 of his 29 points in Atlanta's big first quarter and also had 10 rebounds, leading the Hawks to their fifth straight road victory, 106-105. *AP*

NBA on TV today
8:30 a.m.—LA Clippers vs Detroit
(replays at 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)



KOBE Bryant (left)) of the LA Lakers watches the ball bounce off the rim as Larry Hughes of the Cleveland Cavaliers looks on in the fourth quarter of their NBA game. REUTERS

Montoya 4th in qualifying for Daytona

DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA—COLOMBIA'S Juan Pablo Montoya finished fourth in pole qualifying Sunday for next week's 49th Daytona 500 in the former Formula One star's first official run at the famed 2 1/2-mile oval.

MONTOYA

But thanks to the unique time trials system at the season-opening showcase of the US closed-cockpit series, it will be Thursday before Montoya knows where he starts in the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (Nascar) event.

American David Gilliland captured pole position with a lap at 185.600 mph, becoming only the fourth man to claim the pole in his first try. Gilliland's teammate Ricky Rudd was second in 186.320 to join him in the front row.

Behind the Robert Yates Racing drivers was Montoya's Chip Ganassi Racing teammate David Stremme at 185.487 mph followed by the South American star at 185.338 mph.

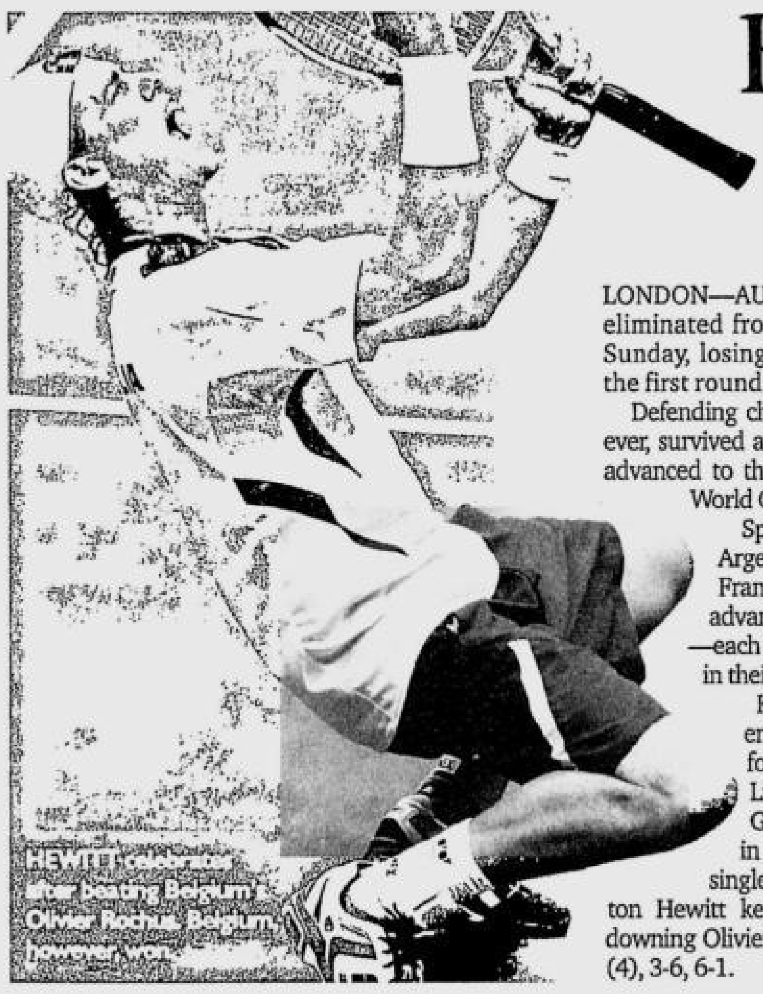
The competition was mainly about deciding the front row since only the two top finishers sealed their spots in next Sunday's 43-car field.

Daytona 500 starting spots were already guaranteed to Montoya and other drivers in the 35 leading cars based upon last season's Nascar points.

But the complete starting lineup will be based upon the results of two qualifying races on Thursday. Montoya will race in the second of these, starting in the second row behind Rudd. *AFP*

Russians rip world mark

VOLGOGRAD, RUSSIA—THE RUSSIAN TEAM set the world indoor record in the rarely run 4x800-meter women's relay at the national athletics championships on Sunday. Anna Balashikhina, Natalia Panteleyeva, Anna Yemashova and Olesya Chumakova clocked eight minutes 18.54 seconds to beat the mark of 8:18.71 set by another Russian quartet at an international athletics meet in Moscow 13 years ago. *Reuters*



Belgium pips Australia; Russia wards off Chile

LONDON—AUSTRALIA WAS eliminated from the Davis Cup on Sunday, losing to Belgium, 3-2, in the first round.

Defending champion Russia, however, survived a scare from Chile and advanced to the quarterfinals of the World Group with a 3-2 win.

Spain, the United States, Argentina, Germany, France and Sweden also advanced to the last eight—each with a match to spare in their best-of-five series.

Kristof Vliegen delivered the winning point for host Belgium in Liege, beating Chris Guccione, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, in the second reverse singles match. Earlier, Lleyton Hewitt kept Australia alive by downing Olivier Rochus, 6-2, 6-3, 6-7 (4), 3-6, 6-1.

"This is phenomenal," said Vliegen, who beat Hewitt in five sets on Friday. "It's the biggest moment of my career—a dream."

Australian Open finalist Fernando Gonzalez beat Marat Safin, 6-3, 7-5, 6-4, to put Chile even with visiting Russia in La Serena, but Igor Andreev finished it off by downing Nicolas Massu, 6-2, 6-1, 6-7 (1), 6-4.

Spain, playing without the injured Rafael Nadal, beat Switzerland, 3-2, in Geneva. Fernando Verdasco earned the winning point by downing Stephane Bohli, 6-3, 6-3, 6-2.

The Americans, who beat the Czech Republic, 4-1, got their deciding point from Andy Roddick, who is 8-0 with victory on the line. The fourth-ranked Roddick beat Tomas Berdych, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 7-6 (4).

"As far as the weight of the situation goes, it definitely could be one of my best matches on clay," Roddick said.

Bob Bryan earned the final point for the 31-time champions by beating Lukas Dlouhy, 7-6 (5), 6-4, in Ostrava, Czech Republic.

Also, it was: France 4, Romania 1; Germany 3, Croatia 2; Sweden 3, Belarus 2; and Argentina 4, Austria 1.

In the quarterfinals in April, the United States will face Spain, France plays Russia, Germany takes on Belgium and Sweden plays Argentina.

Verdasco converted five of eight break points and took advantage of Bohli's 33 unforced errors. Marco Chiudinelli beat David Ferrer, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3, in the fifth match.

The second-ranked Nadal was expected to play in the first round, but he injured a muscle in training before Friday's opening singles. Bohli replaced the injured Stanislas Wawrinka. Top-ranked Roger Federer ruled himself out of the match in November. *AP*

Mosley looks ahead to bigger bouts at 35

LAS VEGAS—SHANE MOSLEY looked so good that even Floyd Mayweather Jr. paid him some grudging respect.

"He's pretty good at what he does," Mayweather said.

What Mosley did Saturday night was turn back the clock with a win over Luis Collazo that was impressive for several reasons. In doing so he also staked a claim as the second-best welterweight in the world behind Mayweather.

Not a bad night's work for a 35-year-old boxer who seems to be coming into his second prime at an age when most others are long gone from the sport.

"I want to keep myself in shape and maybe fight again in June," Mosley said. "I am going to keep myself in shape and tuned up."

Mosley moved back to 66 1/2 kilos (147 pounds) for the first time in nearly five years, promising he would be faster and better than before. He delivered on those promises by consistently beating an opponent 10 years younger to the punch and winning a lopsided 12-round decision.

Mosley, who was smiling when he entered the ring and smiling after almost every round, also showed he still has some sock at 66 1/2 (147) by knocking Collazo down with a right hand late in the 11th round.

"It feels good to be a welterweight again," Mosley said.

The win gave Mosley what the World Boxing Council said was an interim title that he will collect when Mayweather goes through with his May 5 super welterweight fight against Oscar De La Hoya. But the title doesn't make much difference for a boxer who seems re-energized.

MOSLEY: Second prime AP

There are now bigger fights ahead, including a possible fight with Miguel Cotto in June and maybe later a fight with Mayweather, who figures to return to the welterweight division after his bout with De La Hoya.

"I respect him, but only one man can be king," Mayweather said.

Mosley earned $1 million (euro770,000) and raised his record to 44-4 against a tough left-hander who fought hard but didn't have the speed or experience of his older opponent. Collazo said he hurt his left hand in the third round, but it likely wouldn't have made a difference in a fight where Mosley consistently got off the first punches.

Ringside punch statistics showed Mosley landing 200 of 601 punches to 87 of 639 for Collazo, who briefly held a piece of the welterweight title before losing a controversial decision to Ricky Hatton last year.

"I wish I could have been more effective," Collazo said. "But that was the best I could do." *AP*

POC okay for BAP-SBP a done deal

By June Navarro

EXCEPT FOR A MINOR HITCH, THE DOCUMENTS OF the BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas passed the scrutiny of the Philippine Olympic Committee membership committee with flying colors.

Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella, POC vice president and head of the Olympic body's membership committee, said the new organization has complied with the "essential requirements for recognition."

Puentevella said the incomplete listing of new BAP-SBP officers will not prevent the POC executive board from holding the general assembly on Friday.

The BAP-SBP needs a vote of at least two-thirds of the 45 national sports associations under the POC to secure accreditation—a requirement issued by the Fiba (international basketball federation) before it lifts its suspension on the country.

PUENTEVELLA

PANGILINAN

"After scrutinizing the documents they (BAP-SBP officials) submitted, I will recommend that the new national sports association for basketball be recognized by the POC," said Puentevella.

The membership committee will make the recommendation to the POC executive board on Thursday to pave the way for a general assembly the next day.

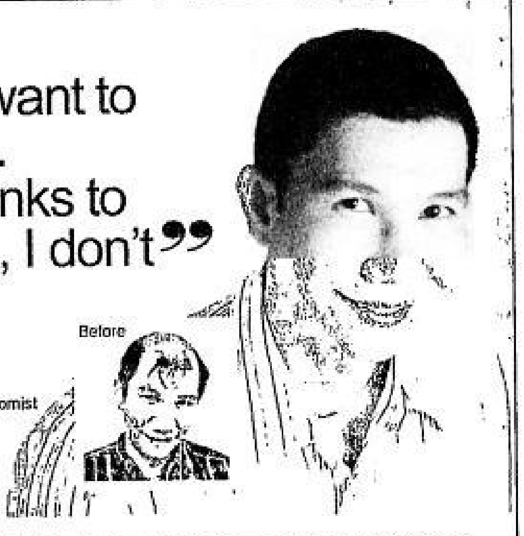
Puentevella, also the weightlifting chief, will present the application for membership of the BAP-SBP before the general assembly, which, if convinced, will bestow the organization recognition on a probationary basis.

"Their documents are not complete, but it's only a minor problem," said Puentevella.

BAP-SBP officials have left the position of executive director vacant. Its officers, led by tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan as president, will serve in an interim capacity until the group holds an election in 2008.

"It's a minor problem that can be corrected later," said Puentevella. "What's important is the acceptance of the POC executive board and the general assembly."

After securing accreditation from the Olympic body, the BAP-SBP will forward the document to the Fiba. Once the suspension is lifted, the POC will automatically elevate the BAP-SBP as a regular member.



"I didn't want to look old. And thanks to Nu/Hart, I don't"

Before

PHILIP MOLEÑO
Prominent CPA-Economist

I wasn't really that bald before, but my father was bald and I knew it could happen to me as well. Sometimes when I saw my old friends and classmates, they would say "oh, you're already balding." I had to do something about it. The earlier, the better.

I've been hearing about Nu/Hart and after learning more about them on TV in Cebu, I wanted to visit the clinic for a free consultation. So I did the next time I was in Manila, and they explained the procedure to me in detail. I scheduled myself for a procedure right then and there.

Nu/Hart's solution is permanent and completely natural. And whatever you do to your normal hair you can do with your Nu/Hart hair transplant. That's how it is for me, thanks to Nu/Hart.

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Inquirer team rules NPC badminton tilt

TEAM INQUIRER COMPLETED its mastery of the Malaya squads to rule the first Yonex-Sunrise-National Press Club (NPC) Tri-Media Badminton Championship over the weekend at the Rizal Memorial Badminton Center.

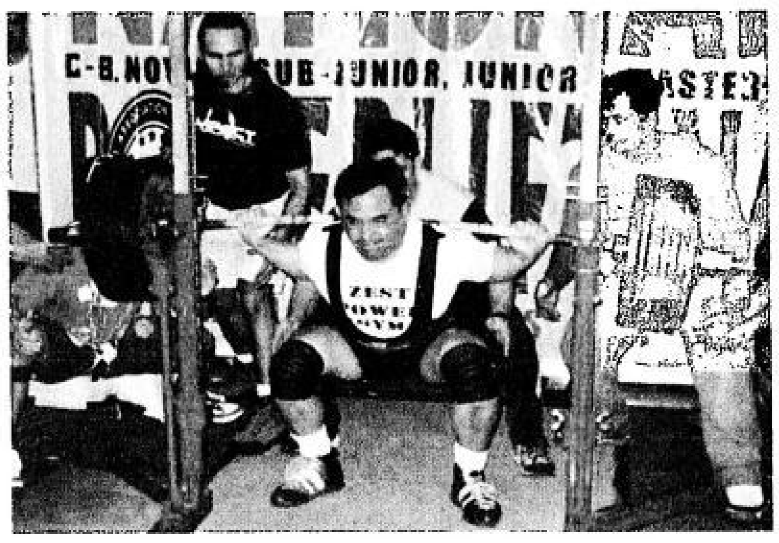
INQUIRER—made up of Vangie Reyes, Gigi Libby, Doris Dumlao, Genie Lagman, Jay Arzobal and Edwin Bacasmas—nipped Malaya B, 2-1, in the best-of-three finals of the two-day tournament participated in by 11 teams from different publications, radio stations and television networks.

Earlier, INQUIRER survived Malaya A, 2-1, in the crossover semifinals. Malaya A finished third after nipping The Manila Standard-Today, 2-1.

Reyes and Libby beat the duo of Susan Ignacio and Jheng David, 21-8, 21-16, in ladies doubles before Dumlao and Lagman bested Neng Perry and Conrad Docena, 21-10, 21-16, in the deciding mixed doubles.

Malaya's Martin Derano and Louie Anonuevo won the first tie in the men's doubles over Arzobal and Bacasmas in the tournament presented by Yonex-Sunrise through the initiative of national coach Errol Chan.

NPC secretary Louie Logarta of the Tribune awarded the trophies and gift packs to the winners.



STRONGEST PINOY SETS RECORD: Eddie Torres of Team Sports Nutrition International Whey Protein and Zest Power Gym squats 733 pounds en route to a combined lift of 1,807 lbs. (squat, dead-lift and bench press)—a new national record—at the 2007 Philippine National Masters Power Lifting Championships. Torres, the strongest Filipino of all-time, bagged the gold medal and best lifter awards. Teammate Lily Pecante, the all-time strongest Filipina, posted a combined lift of 1,151 lbs. to likewise bag the gold medal and best lifter awards.

Pasig River int'l marathon kicks off Feb. 25

THE PHILIPPINE MARATHON FOR THE PASIG River (PMPR), the country's only internationally accredited marathon, fires off Feb. 25 in Intramuros, Manila, with a foreign-flavored cast expected to top last year's 100-strong starting field.

The third edition of the marathon is recognized by both the International Association of Athletic Federations and the Association of International Marathons and Road Races.

The race will take the runners along the river's banks and cross 11 of its 13 bridges. To be fired off at exactly 4:30 a.m., the 42K marathon will end at the Global City in Taguig.

The organizing Clean & Grean Foundation Inc. said registration is ongoing for the race and for the 3K, 5K and 10K side events at the Global City.

The race has grown from a field of 50 participants in 2000 to 1,000—including world-ranked Kenyan Joseph Njogoroge Wambugu who finished 10th—last year.

Winners of the race earn world-ranking points and qualifications to other international races such as the Boston, New York, London, Berlin, Rome marathons.

Borromeo, Ilagan top AIM golf

JUN BORROMEO EMERGED OVERALL champion with a net 71 while Raul Ilagan won low gross honors with an 80 in the recent 5th Masters Golf tournament of the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) at the Sherwood Hills course in Trece Martires City in Cavite.

Mac Panuncialman also grabbed the limelight by topping Class A with a net 71 and then combining with Angel Ilagan to cop the Class A team championship with an aggregate score of 141 in the benefit tournament presented by Smart Gold, Petron and Panasonic.

Joel Ferrer ruled Class B with a net 72, while the Class B team championship went to Ben Sta. Catalina and Felipe Diego. A net 77 gave Khoo Boo Boon the Class C individual crown while the team championship went to Alex Tanwangco and Arps Rivera.

A total of 50 AIM alumni and guests participated in the competition held as a fund-raising activity of the AIM Alumni Association headed by its chair Ricardo Pascua for its various scholarship programs for the underprivileged students and other projects.

Pascua, together with AIMAA vice chair Ramon de Vera presented the trophies and prizes to the top finishers at the awarding ceremonies of the event organized by Pureplay Sports.

The fund-raiser also drew assistance from Pagcor, Ayala Land, Immuvit, Johnnie Walker, Citibank, Mizuno, Balance Lifestyle Fitness Club, Terra Wellness and Spa, and Basement Salon.

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Treasury sets terms for ₱50-B bond swap

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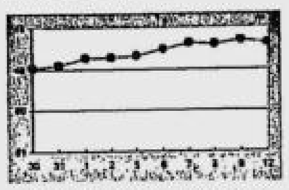

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As of 5 p.m., Feb. 12, 2007

Stocks down on profit-taking

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.36-PERCENT lower yesterday on profit-taking, dealers said.

STOCKS/ B2

Caps yield at 5.5% for 3-year paper

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY HAS SET THE TERMS FOR THE P50-billion bond exchange program, the first swap for this year aimed at boosting liquidity and stretching the average maturity of the government's debt burden.

The Treasury said the 3-year bonds that the government would swap with old government securities will carry a coupon rate of 5.5 percent, while the 5-year bonds will have a coupon rate of 5.75 percent.

The new rates are lower than the 8.5 percent set by the Treasury during its bond exchange program for the 3- and 5-year bonds in February last year.

A bond swap is one of the strategies used by the government to manage the government's liabilities. A swap helps stretch the average maturity of the government's debts and reduce the cost of its borrowings.

The average maturity of the government's debts is lengthened through a swap because an investor who holds a maturing government debt note is invited to swap this for a new 3- or 5-year bond.

Under the latest bond exchange program, holders of government securities that will mature between March 1 this year and Feb. 27, 2012, may swap these debt instruments with either the new 3- or 5-year bonds.

Those who hold government securities that will mature on Feb. 22, 2010, to Feb. 21, 2012, may swap these for the new 5-year bonds. The offering period for the swap will run until Feb. 15.

TREASURY/ B2

IN THIS ISSUE

- Ecozone expects to reel in P917M /B4
- Gov't debt seen rising to P3.82T in '07 /B6

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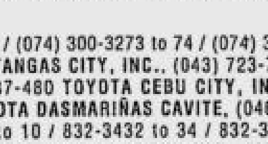
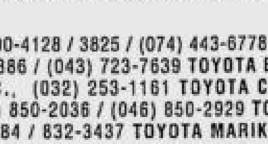
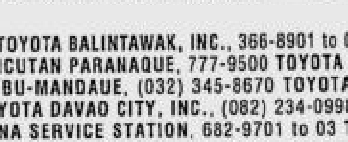

2.4L VVT-i Engine


Cruise Control Feature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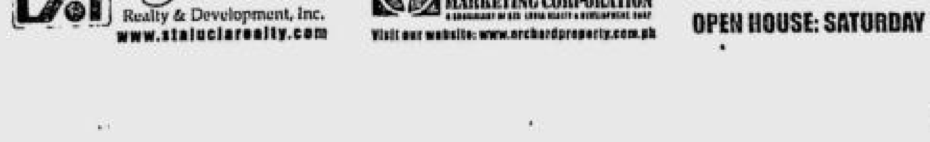

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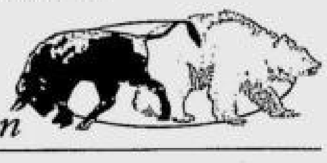
My 10th wedding anniversary

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

TOMORROW IS NOT ONLY VALENTINE'S day, it is also our 10th wedding anniversary. My wife went out and bought a beautiful dress and I bought an orange jump suit with black armbands. I ordered some plastic roses but they died, my plastic goldfish died and my hair dyed. A psychiatrist gave his wife neuroses. We tried to make a reservation at the Greasy Spoon but it was closed due to an outbreak of cholera. Last year, it was typhoid but they found the typhoid carrier and sold her to the US Navy.

Then we tried Quick Belly but it was belly full so we will probably go to the Shangri La. Not exactly in the hotel, just outside in the car park, where we can eat our sandwiches. I have just written my first novel. "10 year with Mrs. Bearbull" and it is available in Norwegian from any bookshop. You will find it in between Stephen King and Anne Rice.

Did you know that sex is hereditary? If your parents never had it, then you are unlikely to have it.

A man is sitting in his living room when the doorbell rings. Outside, he finds a 6-foot cockroach that punches him in the face and leaves. Next night, he answers the doorbell and there is the same 6-foot cockroach, which punches him in the abdomen. The following night, he cautiously answers the door and the 6-foot cockroach knees him in the groin. He staggers to the ER and tells the doctor, "I can't take any more of this." "Sorry," replies the MD, "there's a nasty bug going around."

If lost in the desert, take viagra and an iron supplement. This will turn you into a perfect compass.

* * *

BERNANKE has just finished his first year as FED hair and everyone is pleased with his performance. The job creation figures pleased the market as it fell from a revised 206,000 to 111,000 and the unemployment rate rose to 4.6 percent. Better still, the hourly wage increase slowed from 0.5 percent to an acceptable figure. So for the moment, the economy is slowing and so is inflation. No change in interest rates are expected for some time.

Here, the election race is just warming up and there are already 42 senatorial candidates without my registration. Pacquiao is running for mayor and should win by a knockout. So many candidates have changed sides that I don't know who is who. I doubt if it matters much as there is no party system here. This is more important than opting for a parliamentary system.

The editor of the Business Section is complying with international practice so I can now mention names. Most of you guessed that I was referring to GEO. My article was perfectly timed as GEO confirmed to the PSE that it had several suitors for its 2 low-grade nickel deposits in Zambales. The mining rights of Ganierite Mining and Saprolite Mining bring the company's nickel mining concessions to 18.466 hectares.

GEO said it might acquire the rights either through a property-per-share swap or a share-per-share swap or merely through a cash transaction to address dilution concerns. The latter is now possible because the share price has reached its par value of P1. Valuation of the mining tenements would be conducted by local or international mining consultations.

I first became interested in GEO on Nov. 24, when the company announced a letter of intent to enter into a swap agreement with Rusina Mining, a listed Australian mining company. I heard that GEO was going to model itself on XStrata and Oxiana, both diversified and highly successful companies. For example, XStrata operates in 18 countries and has interests in copper, coal, iron, nickel, vanadium and zinc with additional exposure to gold, lead and silver. The Philippines had a wide variety of minerals valued at $1 trillion so any company following this business model should be successful. Furthermore, we are geographically close to China.

So I bought GEO for myself and recommended it to all my friends. Despite the rise in the share price, everyone still has their original stake and they are in for the long-term. A major Chinese company is rumored to be interested in acquiring all the company's nickel. Discussions with several other foreign companies are ongoing and we should have some news before the end of this month.

Now that the share price is above par, it has generated considerable institutional interest. With multiple tenements covering every region of the country, with interests in nickel, gold and copper, GEO is potentially a unit trust of mining claims and should be valued as such.

For further information, go to www.geograce.com. It is an excellent website and kept up to date so that everybody gets information at the same time. The idea is to ensure transparency. GEO is also committed to make sure that their partners' respect environmental concerns and look after the surrounding communities. I like the way the company is being run.

I am feeling very depressed today. 10 years ago, my girlfriend's father said, "Marry her or you will spend the next 10 years in jail, so I did. Today, I would have been a free man."

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Treasury sets terms for ₱50-B bond swap

From page B1

The Treasury aims to swap as much as P30 billion worth of new 3-year bonds to mature in 2010, and P20 billion worth of 5-year bonds to mature in 2012.

The government's borrowing cost is reduced by a bond swap as the new bonds usually have slightly lower interest rates than the rates imposed on the old debt securities. The government saved P18 billion last year due to lower-than-expected borrowing cost resulting from the bond swaps.

"We believe that these (new 3- and 5-year) bonds will be well received by the market as they are attractively priced and investors will benefit from the expected liquidity of the new bonds," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said.

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Stocks

From page B1

They said investors switched profits to other stocks, mostly second- and third-liners, considered to have positive attributes.

The composite index was down 11.65 points at 3,234.16 after trading between 3,204.85 and 3,245.81. The broader all-share index fell 12.09 points to 2,038.89.

Losers led gainers 56 to 50 with 54 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 2.8 billion shares worth P3.8 billion.

"The market is in a corrective mode," said Ron Rodrigo, research head at Unicapital Securities.

"Investors think it's better for them to pocket some gains for now, stay on the sidelines and wait for fresh leads," he said.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. fell P30 to P2,520 tracking the decline in its American Depositary Receipts on Friday.

Conglomerates were also hit by profit-taking, with SM Investments Corp. down P7.50 at P385, while Ayala Corp. retreated P10 to P625.

However, buying in some blue chips allowed the market to recover some losses in late trade, with Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) and Equitable PCI Bank hitting fresh 52-week highs. AFP

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 9, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	8.2	8.3	8.1	8.2	104,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	56	57.5	55.5	56.5	857,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	71	71	70	70	1,414,400
China Banking Corp.	770	770	765	770	17,180
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	38	38	37	37	1,500
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	3,110,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	97	102	97	102	383,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	62	63	62	62.5	3,533,800
Phil. Bank Of Comm. A	53	53	52.5	52.5	1,500
Philippine National Bank	49	49	49	49	200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	42.5	42.5	41	42	185,200
Security Bank Corp.	77	77.5	77	77.5	614,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	61.5	62	61.5	62	7,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
ATR Kimeng Fin. Corp.	2.8	3.1	2.8	3.1	38,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5.1	5.1	5	5	441,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	32	32	32	32	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1650	1650	1650	30
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	312,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	487.5	490	485	490	133,640
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2080	2115	2080	2115	1,260
Ivantage Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	434,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.2	5.2	32,923,000
First Gen Corp.	56	56	55	55.5	581,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	78	80.5	78	80.5	2,195,100
Manila Electric Co. A	74	77	73	77	405,500
Manila Electric Co. B	75	78.5	73.5	78.5	3,462,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.7	9.9	1,844,000
Petron Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.5	4.55	10,122,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	300,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.26	202,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24.5	25	24.5	25	15,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	45	45	43.5	43.5	886,000
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	22	22	22	22	200
RFM Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	4,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	148,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.43	500,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65.5	65.5	65	65	78,700
San Miguel Corp. B	79.5	79.5	79.5	79.5	54,800
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.08	2.08	2.04	2.06	351,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.25	17.75	17.25	17.25	6,779,200
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.52	19,142,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.45	4.5	4.45	4.45	1,117,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.7	173,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8	8.1	8	8	7,315,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.9	6	5.9	6	251,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.2	5.2	5	5.1	353,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	30,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	20,840,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.01	115,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	17,000,000
Ayala Corp.	630	630	615	625	300,650
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.71	320,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8	8	7.9	8	1,101,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	6	6.1	5.3	5.3	3,153,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.07	0.0675	0.0675	9,400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	20,000
APC Group Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	440,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	143,200,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.26	1.28	1.22	1.28	3,117,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.55	3.5	3.5	95,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.24	1.4	1.24	1.26	353,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.65	4	3.55	3.95	35,885,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.3	7.1	7.2	411,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.2	5.2	4.95	5.1	1,549,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	180,000
House of Investments Inc.	3.1	3.15	2.95	3	1,024,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.5	11	11.5	1,537,600
Keppel Holdings	1.34	1.88	1.34	1.88	3,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.3	6	6.2	814,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.24	2.26	2.16	2.18	1,764,000
Pacifica	0.018	0.02	0.018	0.02	24,400,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.215	16,860,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	20,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	4,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	4,550,000
SM Investments Corp.	387.5	387.5	385	385	426,530
South China Resources Inc.	1.12	1.22	1.12	1.2	2,500,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.74	1.8	1.74	1.8	605,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	380,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16.5	16.75	16.25	16.25	12,530,500
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	200,000
Belle Corp.	1.28	1.3	1.26	1.3	7,227,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.4	1.4	2,112,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	8,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	10,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.7	672,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.3	2.85	2.3	2.65	7,301,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.31	1,070,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	310,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.73	0.73	18,010,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	270,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.065	0.07	0.065	0.07	9,300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.74	1.76	187,084,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.25	1,900,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
Interport Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	106,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	30,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.54	3,150,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.86	0.92	0.86	0.91	14,210,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	5,500,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.65	2.7	39,003,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	340,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.37	290,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.34	2.65	2.34	2.55	384,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	18	18	17.75	18	3,114,500
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.74	0.76	0.74	0.75	49,020,000
SM Development Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.6	3.65	847,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.75	12	11.5	12	11,588,300
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.64	0.65	970,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.105	0.105	1,530,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	2.06	2.06	1.98	2	9,454,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1360	1360	1350	1355	58,850
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.8	2,232,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2545	2550	2480	2520	133,390
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.33	11,430,000
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	3,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.65	2.7	255,000
IPVG Corp.	4.4	4.75	4.4	4.7	4,046,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.0575	0.055	0.0575	21,400,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	230,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.36	2.48	2.34	2.44	2,583,000
Philweb Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.036	0.036	108,500,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.1	4	4	34,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.75	1,439,200
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.22	2.24	2.22	2.22	267,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.37	700,000
Philippine Racing Club	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	16,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.77	0.81	0.77	0.81	2,170,000
EDUCATION					
iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	282,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.14	2.18	2.14	2.16	648,000
Paxys Inc.	26.5	28	26.5	27	1,357,700
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	326,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	100,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	138,800,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.5	9.7	9.4	9.4	1,188,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	28,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	70,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.04	1.08	1.04	1.08	61,337,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	27,870,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.3	23,010,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.026	552,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.031	0.029	0.03	501,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	183,400,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4	4	3.95	4	6,667,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.25	17.5	418,900
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.76	0.76	0.74	0.74	460,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.5	1.5	1.44	1.5	3,027,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.3	14,690,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	60,900,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	16,400,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	16,000,000
PNOC Exploration Corp.-B	18	18	18	18	1,000
PREFERRED					
Ayala Corp. Pref. B	116	116	116	116	2,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	11	11	11	11	1,000

CURRENCIES

February 12, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.768758	1.000000	48.3080
Japan	Yen	0.006321	0.008222	0.3972
United Kingdom	Pound	1.499231	1.950200	94.2103
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098385	0.127979	6.1824
Switzerland	Franc	0.615794	0.801025	38.6959
Canada	Dollar	0.655936	0.853242	41.2184
Singapore	Dollar	0.501538	0.652401	31.5162
Australia	Dollar	0.596538	0.775976	37.4858
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.039091	2.652450	128.1346
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.204975	0.266631	12.8804
Brunei	Dollar	0.499908	0.650280	31.4137
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022880	0.029762	1.4377
UAE	Dirham	0.209328	0.272294	13.1540
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.300800	62.8390
Korea	Won	0.000823	0.001070	0.0517
China	Yuan**	0.099225	0.129072	6.2352
Argentina	Peso	0.247787	0.322321	15.5707
Brazil	Real	0.366075	0.476190	23.0038
Denmark	Kroner	0.134199	0.174566	8.4329
India	Rupee	0.017499	0.022763	1.0996
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220098	0.286303	13.8307
Mexico	New Peso	0.069852	0.090864	4.3895
New Zealand	Dollar	0.525000	0.682920	32.9905
South Africa	Rand	0.107669	0.140056	6.7658
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023321	0.030336	1.4655

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Feb. 9, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of Feb. 9, 2007

Ayala profit up by 49% in ’06

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA CORP. SAID ITS NET INCOME surged 49 percent in 2006 to P12.2 billion from P8.2 billion in 2005.

In a statement, the company said the increase was attributed to robust growth of its operating units, lower interest costs and gains from sale of assets.

INQUIRER sources said Ayala Corp. gained P4.6 billion from the sale of shares in Ayala Land, Bank of the Philippine Islands and Globe Telecom; stake in Burger King, and small provincial real estate assets.

Ayala Land posted consolidated profit of P3.9 billion in 2006, up 7 percent from year-ago level, while consolidated revenue rose by 20 percent. Residential development revenue grew by 47 percent while

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In our fast-paced lifestyle today, sickness and diseases are a reality. Latest Department of Health statistics show that the leading causes of sickness are respiratory diseases and diseases of the heart. On the other hand, major causes of death are heart disease, followed by vascular system diseases (any condition that affects your circulatory system such as aneurysm, blood clots, pulmonary embolism, deep vein thrombosis, etc.) and cancer. Every year, more than 70,000 Filipinos die of heart diseases, 49,000 from vascular disease and about 39,000 from cancer.* Based on recent studies, while genetic factors play a part, more people get heart disease and other common illnesses because of pollution, the fast-food lifestyle, low physical activity and generally, an increasingly stressful work life.

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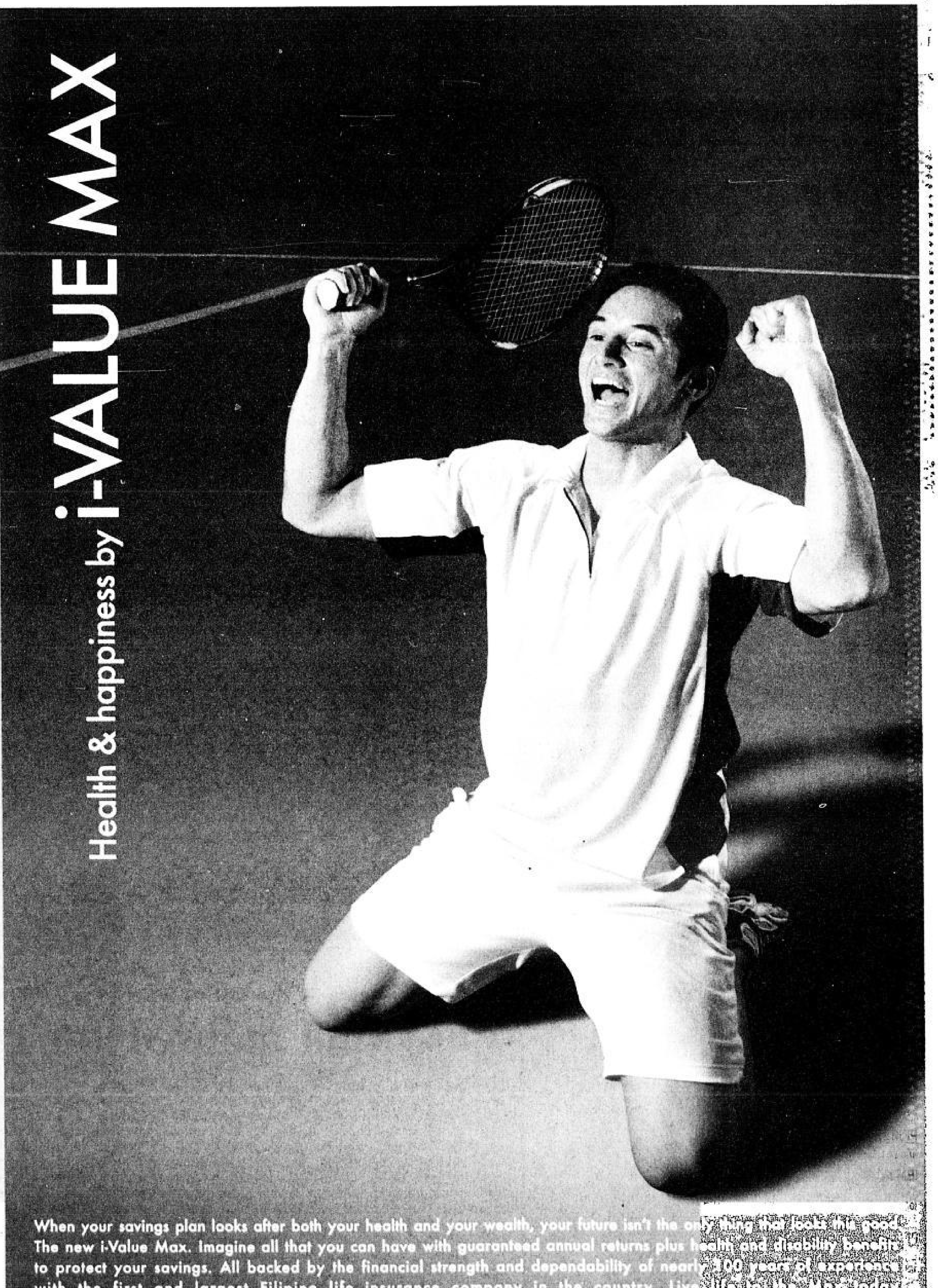
*DOH Health Statistics, Leading causes of Mortality.
www.doh.gov.ph/data_stat/html/mortality.htm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East Service Road, South Superhighway, Taguig City

54th TESDA BOARD MEETING
16 January 2007, Tuesday, 3:00 p.m.
7th Floor TESDA Board Room, Office of the Chair
Taguig City

Resolution No. 2007-01

APPROVING THE AMENDMENTS ON THE TRAINING REGULATIONS FOR CAREGIVING NCII

WHEREAS, Board Resolution No. 2003-01 "Approving and Adopting the Training Regulations for the Caregiving" was promulgated by the TESDA Board through the TESDA Board Referendum dated 10 January 2003, and Board Resolution No. 2004-21 "Authorizing the Publication of the Reformatted Training Regulations for Caregiving NCII" during the 44th TESDA Board Meeting which was held last December 9, 2004;

WHEREAS, to support and address the urgency of supplying the demand for workers by employers both in the local and overseas market for caregivers, there is a need to amend Section-4 National Assessment and Certification Arrangements of the said Training Regulations to include assessment of individuals along competencies for specific types of clients;

WHEREAS, the qualifications of the Caregiving NCII may be attained through 1) the demonstration of all units of competency through project-type assessment leading to a full National Certificate (NC), or 2) the accumulation of Certificates of Competency (COCs) in the following areas: a) providing care and support for infants, toddlers and children, and b) providing care and support for the elderly and people with special needs both areas of which will include the household service competencies;

WHEREAS, during the First Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development (SSSD) and Finance TESDA Board and TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting held on 15 January 2007, the amendments to the Training Regulations for Caregiving NCII (Section-4 National Assessment and Certification Arrangements to include *assessment of individuals along specific units of Competency (COCs), providing care and support for infants, toddlers and children; providing care and support for elderly and people with special needs; and demonstration of competence through project-type assessment covering all required units of qualification)* were presented and deliberated on;

WHEREAS, during the First Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development (SSSD) and Finance TESDA Board and TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting held on 15 January 2007, the committee agreed to recommend the amendments on the Training Regulations for Caregiving NCII;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves the aforementioned amendments to the training regulations, as attached;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copies of this Resolution and amendment copies of the Training Regulations (TRs) for Caregiving NCII be published and disseminated to all concerned and shall be effective fifteen (15) days upon its publication. All programs under these amended training regulations must comply with the requirements of the aforementioned TRs. There shall be mandatory national assessment required for graduates of TVET courses covered by this TR.

Adopted this 16th day of January 2007.

(Sgd.) **MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO**
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

(Sgd.) **DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary and Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

Resolution No. 2007-02

APPROVING THE EXTENSION OF PROVISIONAL ASSESSMENT FEES ON FORTY-FIVE (45) QUALIFICATIONS BASED ON THE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 2005-18 FOR A PERIOD OF SIX (6) MONTHS SUBJECT TO REVIEW

WHEREAS, Section 8, paragraph 9 of Republic Act No. 7796 or the Technical Education and Skills Development Act of 1994 empowers the TESDA Board to "exact reasonable fees and charges for such tests and training conducted and retain such earnings for its own use, subject to guidelines promulgated by the Authority;"

WHEREAS, in the 46th TESDA Board Meeting held 19 May 2005, the TESDA Board Members approved Board Resolution No. 2005-07 "The Adoption of the Guidelines in the Implementation of the Philippine TVET Qualification and Certification System:"

WHEREAS, Section 7 of the Guidelines in the Implementation of the Philippine TVET Qualification and Certification Systems provides that "Assessment fees shall be based on the cost of supplies and materials as well as administrative expenses including Assessor's honoraria, power and utilities, depreciation and maintenance costs. Assessment fees shall be subject to change to allow for any possible adjustments due to costs increases;"

WHEREAS, in the 48th TESDA Board Meeting held 10 November 2005, the TESDA Board Members approved Board Resolution No. 2005-18 "Approving the Provisional Assessment Fees by Qualification"; (45 qualifications) for a period of six (6) months, subject to evaluation of its pilot implementation and submission of its findings and recommendations;

WHEREAS, during the First Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting held on 15 January 2007, the Members of the SSSD and Finance Committee-TESDA Board favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the Board, the extension of the provisional assessment fees of forty-five (45) qualifications based on the previously approved Board Resolution No. 2005-18 for a period of six (6) months subject to review;

WHEREAS, in the 54th TESDA Board Meeting held 16 January 2007, the TESDA Board considered and approved the recommendation made by the TESDA Board Members during the First Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance TB-TS Consultation Meeting last 15 January 2007;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves the extension of the provisional assessment fees of forty-five (45) qualifications based on the previously approved Board Resolution No. 2005-18 for a period of six (6) months subject to review;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copy of the resolution shall be disseminated to all concerned.

Adopted this 16th day of January 2007.

(Sgd.) **MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO**
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

(Sgd.) **DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary and Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

Resolution No. 2007-03

APPROVING THE EXACTION OF UNIFORM ASSESSMENT FEE OF ONE THOUSAND PESOS (Php1,000.00) FOR THE REMAINING SIXTY-THREE (63) QUALIFICATIONS FOR A PERIOD OF SIX (6) MONTHS SUBJECT TO REVIEW

WHEREAS, Section 8, paragraph 9 of Republic Act No. 7796 or the Technical Education and Skills Development Act of 1994 empowers the TESDA Board to "exact reasonable fees and charges for such tests and training conducted and retain such earnings for its own use, subject to guidelines promulgated by the Authority;"

WHEREAS, in the 46th TESDA Board Meeting held 19 May 2005, the TESDA Board Members approved Board Resolution No. 2005-07 "The Adoption of the Guidelines in the Implementation of the Philippine TVET Qualification and Certification System:

WHEREAS, Section 7 of the Guidelines in the Implementation of the Philippine TVET Qualification and Certification Systems provides that "Assessment fees shall be based on the cost of supplies and materials as well as administrative expenses including Assessor's honoraria, power and utilities, depreciation and maintenance costs. Assessment Fees shall be subject to change to allow for any possible adjustments due to costs increases;"

WHEREAS, during the First Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting held on 15 January 2007, the Members of the SSSD and Finance Committee-TESDA Board favorably endorsed for consideration and approval of the Board, the exaction of a uniform assessment fee of One Thousand Pesos (Php1,000.00) for the remaining sixty-three (63) qualifications for a period of six (6) months subject to review;

WHEREAS, the proposed uniform assessment fee shall cover:

1. Assessor's fee	Php 250.00
2. Technical & Administrative Cost (to be remitted to TESDA)	100.00
3. Fixed Cost, etc. (will go to Assessment Center) *• Utilities* *• Supplies and materials* *• Depreciation of tools and equipment* *• Payment to assessment center*	650.00
TOTAL	Php1,000.00

WHEREAS, the six months period for the application of the uniform assessment fee shall commence upon deployment of the assessment tools;

WHEREAS, in the 54th TESDA Board Meeting, 16 January 2007 the TESDA Board considered and approved the recommendation made by the TESDA Board Members during the First Joint Standard Setting and Systems Development and Finance TESDA Board-TESDA Secretariat Consultation Meeting last 15 January 2007;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board approves the exaction of uniform assessment fee of One Thousand Pesos (Php1,000.00) for the remaining sixty three (63) qualifications for a period of six (6) months subject to review;

BE IT RESOLVED FINALLY, that copy of the resolution shall be disseminated to all concerned.

Adopted this 16th day of January 2007.

(Sgd.) **MA. ADORINDA DE JESUS-FORRO**
Board Secretary VI

Attested by:

(Sgd.) **DR. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**
Alternate Chair, TESDA Board
Secretary and Director General
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

TRAINING REGULATIONS COVERED BY THE UNIFORM ASSESSMENT FEES

1. Agricultural Crops NCI
2. Agricultural Crops NCIII
3. Animation NCIII
4. Air Duct Servicing NCII
5. Automotive Body Painting/Finishing NCI
6. Automotive Body Painting/Finishing NCIII
7. Automotive Servicing NCI
8. Automotive Servicing NCIII
9. Automotive Servicing NCIV
10. Barangay Health Services NCII
11. Biomedical Equipment NCII
12. Carpentry NCIII
13. Consumer Electronics NCII
14. Consumer Electronics NCIII
15. Consumer Electronics NCIV
16. Construction Painting NCII
17. Construction Painting NCIII
18. Deck Seafaring NCI
19. Deck Seafaring NCII
20. Deck Seafaring NCIII
21. Emergency Medical Services NCII
22. Engine Seafaring NCI
23. Engine Seafaring NCII
24. Engine Seafaring NCIII
25. Fish Capture NCI
26. Fish Capture NCII
27. Flux-Cored Arc Welding NCI
28. Flux-Cored Arc Welding NCII
29. Flux-Cored Arc Welding NCIII
30. Gas Metal Arc Welding NCI
31. Gas Metal Arc Welding NCII
32. Gas Metal Arc Welding NCIII
33. Gas Welding NCI
34. Gas Welding NCII
35. Gas Tungsten Arc Welding NCII
36. Gas Tungsten Arc Welding NCIV
37. Heavy Equipment (Mechanical) NCII
38. Horticulture NCIII
39. Ice Plant Refrigeration Servicing NCIII
40. Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCII
41. Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCIII
42. Instrumentation and Control Servicing NCIV
43. Machining NCI
44. Machining NCIII
45. Masonry NCI
46. Masonry NCIII
47. Massage Therapy NCII
48. Mechatronics Servicing NCII
49. Mechatronics Servicing NCIII
50. Mechatronics Servicing NCIV

TRAINING REGULATIONS COVERED BY UNIFORM ASSESSMENT FEES

51. PC Operations NCII
52. Performing Arts (Dance) NCII
53. Performing Arts (Song) NCII
54. Programming NCIV
55. Plumbing NCI
56. Plumbing NCIII
57. Pyrotechnics NCII
58. Slaughtering Operations NCII
59. Submerged Arc Welding NCI
60. Submerged Arc Welding NCII
61. Welding (SMAW) NCI
62. Welding (SMAW) NCIII
63. Welding (SMAW) NCIV

(PDI–Feb. 13 & 17, 2007)

Ecozone expects to reel in ₱917M

Investments go to expansion projects

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A TOTAL OF AT LEAST P917.7 MILLION in new investments has been committed to the Baguio City Economic Zone, even though the Supreme Court last year had decided that the ecozone should not enjoy tax perks and other incentives.

According to the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, new locator projects accounted for P118.2 million, while expansion projects of existing locators took up the remaining P800.5 million.

Peza data show that aviation technology firm Moog has made the biggest commitment in terms of investments, amounting to $10.5 million, or about P514.5 million.

Moog is putting up two new buildings at the BCEZ.

Also, Clientlogic is putting in $5.5 million, or P269.5 million, for its 1,000-seat call center operation for American clients.

Facilities provider Omed of Japan is laying out P22 million for a 1,200 square-meter outfit, while Filipino firm NTUI is investing P4.5 million for a 108-seat call center.

A new entrant, Filipino firm Panorama, is putting up P60 million for a three-story building, while another firm Edgeworth is putting in P30 million.

Medical transcription service firm SynapseSystems will lay out P10 million for a 500-seat operation.

Korean firm WOW-MRT will build a P10-million material recover facility.

In 2006, investments to the ecozone reached a total of P1.3 billion.

Also last year, a total of $3.54 billion worth of goods were exported from BCEZ. The number of jobs reached 5,654, with aggregate salaries and wages of P1.86 billion.

Ayala profit up

From page B3

that contributed by shopping centers rose by 12 percent.

The office sector saw robust growth on rising demand from the business process outsourcing industry.

BPI posted a net income of P9 billion, 8 percent higher than year-ago level, with its revenue posting a 9 percent growth fueled by higher net interest and non-interest income. BPI's total resources reached P582 billion in 2006, with deposits up 11 percent to P467 billion. Net loans expanded by 6 percent with both corporate and consumer loans posting growth.

BPI's bad loans ratio declined to 5.5 percent, which was below the industry average of 6.96 percent.

Globe closed the year with a consolidated net income of about P12 billion, 14 percent higher than year-ago level. Its wireless subscriber base grew 26 percent to 15.7 million at year end.

AC Capital contributed 20 percent of the group's equity earnings, with utility firm Manila Water and Integrated Microelectronics serving as the main growth drivers.

Manila Water posted a record net income of P2.4 billion, up 19 percent from the previous year.

Electronics subsidiary Integrated Microelectronics Inc. reported a net income of US$33 million, 28 percent higher than the previous year, with revenue reaching US$393 million.

Dud or alive

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

PALACE APOLOGISTS WANT us to believe that, if the economy is alive today, we must thank this cute administration of Gloriaetta.

I see. Is that the reason why the latest bidding for Transco is another dud?

In the bidding last week, I'm afraid that Transco attracted more flies than bidders. Sorry, boss-ma'am, *nilangaw!*

When only the Citadel-Terna group submitted an offer, the government company called PSALM thus declared another failed bidding.

That is already failure No. 3, okay! This cute administration now seems to be addicted to failure. And they say it is doing great with the economy. Is that so?

Never mind that Transco's privatization is the key in cutting power rates in this country (only the 2nd highest in Asia) under the electricity reform program Epira.

So much can already be said about this cute administration's indecisiveness in carrying out the Epira, which is the law of the land.

Last week's failed bidding for Transco tells the whole world a lot about the lack of interest in this country for big-ticket investments.

Moreover, it also reinforces suspicion in business that the Napocor-Transco "mafia" may be leaning towards another group for this mother of all privatizations.

Five years ago in 2001, as its first attempt at Transco privatization, this cute administration also tried and failed to get a "negotiated" sale with a Singapore group.

Thus, the country should only sink deeper into desperation on the Transco privatization—what with one failed bidding after another.

It's time for the "mafia" to cook the terms and conditions, making them just right for the taste of the "pre-chosen winner."

Come on, they do it everyday!

Question: Since this country needs to invest at least $1 billion on power transmission, how can we be certain that the mafia's favored group has the money?

And that's probably why the PCCI, or the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, calls for negotiation between Citadel-Terna and Psalm on the sale of Transco.

Look, Citadel-Terna showed interest in this most sophisticated bidding, prepared even by foreign financial advisers such as the House of Rothschild and Credit Suisse.

As the PCCI thinking goes, it is perhaps worthy for Psalm to pursue that kind of keen interest, if only to speed up a privatization, which is already five years overdue.

If the negotiations fail, then Psalm can always go for another (only the fourth) bidding. Well, preparation for another bidding takes only two years.

For five years, we have been trying to privatize Transco—a crucial step in cutting power rates here. But we still have nothing to show for it. Is the "mafia" having fun?

* * *

Between us girls, still ongoing is a strong lobby for the Palace to act now on the fast-shrinking Philcomsat group of companies.

It actually involves the Illusorio-Africa faction, which is calling for the liquidation of the businesses—as in "right now," before their cash is gone for good.

And the lobby, according to talk in business, already reached Gloriaetta herself.

At one point, the Illusorio-Africa group made representation with the President. She supposedly telephoned somebody big in the Palace, right in front of the representation. She told the person on the other side of the line, and in harsh language, to get rid of some blood relations who were government nominees to the Philcomsat group.

And true enough, nothing happened! Does anybody even listens to Gloriaetta anymore? Well, the blood relations are still in the Philcomsat group.

To think, in the Senate hearing on the alleged "stealing" of government nominees in the Philcomsat group, which may be useless except for the media pressure on this cute administration, volumes upon volumes of official records (from the SEC, in fact) showed a lot of ... well, "stealing."

And so the Illusorio-Africa group wants the government to liquidate the businesses now, put the proceeds in escrow, and then just wait for the settlement of the court cases.

That way, according the lobby with Gloriaetta, the government can still get something before everything is stolen.

* * *

Actually, a similar approach to the case of San Miguel Corp., the country's largest private business, was in the works during the time of the late Haydee Yorac at the PCGG.

Initiating the talks with Yorac then was a big gun in one of the better-known accounting firms in the country, who wanted a "free" San Miguel.

At present, the government controls 40 percent of the company through the PCGG sequestered shares, and the GSIS and SSS holdings.

And then San Miguel chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. controls 23 percent.

Some major stockholders like Henry Sy (SM group), Kirin Beer of Japan, the SMC Retirement Fund, and institutional investors (the Catholic church for example) account for another 30 percent of the shares.

Thus, the company has barely enough shares for the public to trade in the stock exchanges.

Now, the stock market has come to life. This may be a good time for the government to do a secondary public offering of its 40 percent San Miguel shares.

Unlike the bidding held for the shares of PTIC (the PLDT holding company), in which the bloc goes to a single group, a public offering will spread out the shares to more people, thus widening ownership base, which is good for stock market trading.

The same formula then applies: Just put the proceeds in escrow until the final settlement of the cases.

Meanwhile, the biggest private business in the country becomes a real public company. I mean, why not?

Power rates on their way down in Davao

ELECTRICITY RATES IN DAVAO may fall by as much as 15.99 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh), following the Energy Regulatory Corp.'s approval of an agreement between the Aboitizes' Davao Light and Power Co. (DLPC) and the National Transmission Corp.

In a Jan. 15 order, the ERC approved a memorandum of agreement between DLPC and Transco, which involved the provision of "reactive power support" from DLPC's Bajada Power Plant, subject to dispatch instructions from Transco's Mindanao System Operator.

Reactive power support refers to an ancillary service that is dispatched to the grid during power shortages and/or low-voltage situations.

This helps maintain the proper voltage level or power quality in the affected grid. Under the DLPC-Transco agreement, this power supply can be sourced from the DLPC's Bajada Power Plant.

Under the agreement, the provision of reactive power support to the grid will be on a "non-firm basis," or with no fixed commitments, and just as the need arises.

"The Davaoeños served by DLPC will enjoy lower rates when its Bajada Power Plant is operated, whenever reactive power support is required and (the National Power Corp.) is not able to fully provide such ancillary service," ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. explained.

During such times, he said Transco would pay DLPC for the availment of the service. As a result of this transaction, DLPC could opt to give this additional income back to its customers by way of lower rates.

"DLPC customers can enjoy a possible rate reduction of 15.99 centavos per kWh, based on Transco's 2004 actual availment of reactive power support," Albano said.

"With the MOA between DLPC and Transco in place, the consumers of DLPC will benefit in terms of lower rates and all the consumers in the Mindanao grid will be assured of a more stable and reliable power supply."

Also on Jan. 15, when it approved the DLPC-Transco agreement, the ERC also issued its final decision on DLPC's rates unbundling application.

Abigail L. Ho

More funds poured into coal-to-fuel plant

By Abigail L. Ho

AMERICAN FIRM HEADWATERS Inc. is infusing $6.6 million into a coal-to-fuels project, even though it is still waiting for the Philippine government to decide on the counterpart funding for the same project that is expected to help ease the country's dependence on imported oil.

Antonio Ver, president of local development partner H&WB Corp., said Headwaters chair and chief executive Kirk Benson approved the investment just last Sunday.

The $6.6-million infusion would jumpstart the second phase of the three-phase project, which involved process engineering design of the preliminary front-end and engineering design (pre-FEED), technology licensing agreement, and the construction of the Fischer-Tropsch Process Determination Unit (FT PDU), or a facility that turns coal into liquid fuels, Ver said.

The US Department of Energy and the Illinois Coal Competitiveness Program are also providing a $5.7-million grant to help bankroll the establishment of the pilot-scale FT PDU.

The facility, which would be constructed at the Gas Technology Institute (GTI) in Des Plaines, Illinois, would also be partly funded by H&WB Corp., Ver said.

He said Headwaters and H&WB had already invested $3.2 million in the project's first phase, or the pre-feasibility study stage.

Total investment for these major activities, he said, would reach close to $14.8 million.

"This will catapult the project towards timely completion of project development activities and, forthwith, bring the project to the market for financial closure," Ver said.

"Headwaters is also signing a technology license agreement with H&WB in mid-March. The term sheets for the pre-FEED contract and license agreement are undergoing final review."

The proposed coal liquefaction facility is expected to yield 61,200 barrels a day of ultra-clean fuels, including 11,100 barrels a day of liquefied petroleum gas.

Apart from gasoline, diesel and LPG, the facility can also generate 67.2 megawatts (MW) of power on combined cycle from the steam that will be recovered from the liquefaction plant.

The 67.2-MW power can be channeled to the grid.

The proposed project will make the Philippines the Southeast Asian hub for coal-to-liquids conversion, given its proximity to sources of suitable coal within the Philippines and around the region, as well as to coal shipping routes.

"Significant is the fact that the project can effectively cut the country's dependence on imported oil by at least 20 percent, producing ultra-clean transportation fuels at 40 percent cheaper than imported petroleum products," Ver said.

"This saves valuable foreign exchange and, more than ever, is the clearest and most solid infrastructure response in alternative energy development amid the ever-increasing prices of imported oil," he added.

World congress on cosmetic and dermatologic surgery set

THE PHILIPPINES WILL HOST THE 6th World Congress in Cosmetic and Dermatologic Surgery on March 2-4 with the Philippine Society for Cosmetic Surgery (PSCS) and the Philippine Academy of Dermatologic Surgery Foundation Inc. (PADSFI) in cooperation with Asia pacific Academy of Cosmetic Surgery (APACS) spearheading the event.

The three-day conference with the theme "Cosmetic and Dermatologic Surgeries… Innovations and Controversies", boasts of local and internationally-renowned surgeons who will provide insightful dialogue, information exchange, top-of-the-line strategies, and management techniques focusing on current innovations and controversies in cosmetic and dermatologic surgery as well as the latest trends in facial reconstruction.

The lectures and papers will be delivered on March 2 and 3 at Hotel Intercontinental in Makati while live-patient demonstrations will be conducted on March 4 at the World City Medical Center in Quezon City. Both lectures and live-patient demonstrations feature over 40 minimally invasive procedures for workshops as presided by the world's most respected and accomplished cosmetic surgeons and dermatologists. Some of the procedures covered are hair transplant; chin, forehead, penile, buttocks, breasts and malar implantations; body sculpturing; rhinoplasty and alar base trimming; sexual reassignment; dermabrasion and skin resurfacing; and abdominoplasty.

At the helm of this event are Dr. Corazon Collantes-Jose, president of PSCS and Japan's Dr. Tetsu shu, president of APACS. Chairs of the event's organizing committee are Dr. Mariano Agcaoili of PSCS and Dr. Agnes Thaebtharm, president of PADSFI. The congress is part of APACS and its allied organizations' on-going advocacy to address the growing need of the cosmetic surgeons and dermatologists of the global community for an open space to share and discuss the most up-to-date developments in the practice of cosmetic surgery and dermatology.

Local and foreign delegations of cosmetic surgeons and dermatologists are invited to participate in the conference. For more information, log on to www.apacsworldcongress.com. Pre-registration deadline is on Feb. 15, 2007.

NFA-FDC offers seminar on predictive microbiology

THE FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER of the National Food Authority invites interested parties to a seminar-workshop entitled Predictive Microbiology as Applied to Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan Development, Shelf Life Testing and Microbial Risk Assessment to be held on February 28 to March 2 from 8:30 AM to 4 PM at the FDC Compound, FTI Complex, Tagig City.

The seminar workshop will cover the underlying principles of microbiology, physicochemical factors in foods and the environment affecting the behavior of microbial populations. Participants will learn how to apply computer software for predictive modeling for HACCP, Risk Assessment and to food quality assurance programs.

Exercises will involve some mathematical and statistical calculations. The principal lecturer for the seminar-workshop is Dr. Manuel Garcia, a visiting consultant from Canada. Dr. Garcia was formerly a senior research scientist of the Animal Diseases Research Institute, Agriculture Canada. He has conducted workshops on HACCP and Rapid Tests in Asia, Australia, China, Latin America and North America. A two-time Presidential awardee for Outstanding Filipino Overseas for Agriculture in 1977 and for Microbiology and Food Safety in 1988, Dr. Garcia is also a distinguished alumni of the University of the Philippines-Los Baños.

The course fee is P6,550 per participant inclusive of a seminar manual, lunches, snacks and a shuttle bus service from Ayala Center, Makati to FDC and back. Checks must be made payable to the Food Development Center, National Food Authority.

Participants may opt to stay at the FDC dormitory with air-conditioned rooms that can accommodate 2 persons per room. Adjoining rooms share a toilet and bath with hot shower. Room charge is P790 per room per day for double occupancy and P600 per room per day for single occupancy.

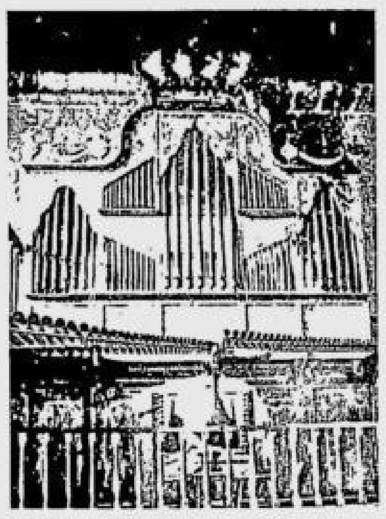
For more information, please contact Amelia Bautista of the FDC-NFA at telephone numbers 838-4014, 838-4561, 838-4478 and fax number 838-4017 and 838-4692.

32nd International Bamboo Organ festival

THE 32ND INTERNATIONAL BAMboo Organ Festival will open on Thursday Feb. 22 and run until March 1, 2007. The week-long festival which takes place in St. Joseph's Church of Las Piñas City where the renowned Bamboo Organ is located, focuses primarily on performances of sacred music from all periods of musical history.

The opening concert, traditionally an invitational gala for festival subscribers, will also celebrate the special relationship between Las Piñas and the CICM Missionaries, who are marking the centennial of their presence in the country this year. This Belgian missionary order provided parish priests for Las Piñas for about 85 years, and it was during their tenure in the parish that the Bamboo Organ, after many years of disrepair, was restored to working order and the festival was founded. The program on Feb. 22 – with a repeat on the 23rd – is entitled "Baroque Masters", and features Bach's Cantata no. 52 for solo soprano and Brandenburg Concerto no. 6 transcribed for piano four hands; and three Scarlatti Sonatas and Suite no. 16 by Weiss will be performed by a guitar duo. Armando Salarza will be featured organist for the first concert, and Dalibor Miklavcic from Slovenia on the second. Other performing artists are Camille L. Molina, soprano, Anamaria de Guzman and Najib Ismail, pianists, guitarists Sixto Roxas and Ruben Reyes, the Las Piñas Boys Choir, and the Festival Orchestra conducted by Jonathan Velasco.

Concert Under The Trees on Feb. 24 is performed in the church courtyard and features less serious musical fare. Artists for this affair are Rico J. Puno and Jacqui Magno, with the participation of Christine Love Marcaida and Rita Daniela Iringan. An Evening of Organ Music follows on Feb. 26, when Slovenian organist Dalibor Miklavcic plays a full recital divided between two organs: the historic Bamboo Organ, now declared a national Cultural Treasure, and the more contemporary instrument in the Auditorium, which is the first Filipino-built organ. Featured are works by various composers for the organ, including pieces by Frescobaldi, Bach, and Dubois.



Bamboo Organ at Las Piñas.

On Feb. 27, Fiesta Musika pays tribute to the late National Artists for Music, Maestro Lucio D. San Pedro. It will be an evening of his compositions for voice, chorus, clarinet, piano trio and woodwind quintet, performed by singers Camille L. Molina and Abdul Candao, clarinetist Randy Lopez, the Diego Cera Trio, BSJ Woodwind Quintet, and the Las Pinas Boys Choir directed by Armando Salarza. The closing concert Ode To St. Cecilia on March 1 honors the patron saint of music, with organ and choral pieces by Schubiger, Britten, and Handel performed by Austrian organist Dr. Johann Trummer, singers Camille L. Molina and Abdul Candao, the Ateneo Chamber Singers and the Festival Orchestral led by conductor and choir master Jonathan Velasco.

Come and enjoy the finest in sacred music at the 2007 edition of the International Bamboo Organ Festival. For tickets and inquiries, please call the Festival Secretariat at 510-3839.

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Province of Bohol
Municipality of Dagohoy

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Support for Strategic Local Development Investment Project (S2LDIP)

IMPROVEMENT/EXPANSION OF DAGOHOY MUNICIPAL WATERWORKS SYSTEM PROJECT
Loan No. 4833-PH

1. The Land Bank of the Philippines has received a loan from the World Bank toward the cost of Support for Strategic Local Development Investment Project (S2LDIP), and it intends to apply part or the whole of the proceeds of this loan to be on-lent to the Local Government Units (LGUs), public utilities or private operators providing local infrastructure services for payment under the contract for the Improvement/Expansion of Dagohoy Municipal Waterworks System.
2. The Municipal Government of Dagohoy has received a loan from LBP under the World Bank assisted S2LDIP loan facility. The Municipality of Dagohoy now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Construction of Dagohoy Municipal Water System. Completion of the water system is required within eight (8) months from start of Contract.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act subject to exceptions stated in this Bidding Document. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Municipal Government of Dagohoy and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM starting February 6, 2007.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non refundable fee of PhP 10,000.00. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before March 6, 2007 at 2:00 PM.
7. The Municipal Government of Dagohoy will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on February 19, 2007, 2:00 PM. at the SB Session Hall, Municipal Hall, Poblacion, Dagohoy, Bohol.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the Municipal Hall, Poblacion, Dagohoy, Bohol on or before March 8, 2007 at 2:00 PM. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of a Bank Guarantee and in an amount equivalent to 1.5% of bid proposal or in an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on March 8, 2007 at 2:00 PM at the Dagohoy Municipal Hall. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 2:00 PM, March 8, 2007.
9. To be considered eligible and qualified a Bidder must:
   - (a) have a successful experience as prime contractor in the construction of at least one (1) work of a nature and complexity equivalent to the Works in the last five (5) years, such being verifiable from completion certificates. To comply with this requirement the single contract cited should be at least 80% of the contract being procured.
   - (b) have a minimum average annual construction turnover over the last three (3) years equal to 100% of the contract being procured.
   - (c) submit audited balance sheets or, if not required by the law of the applicants country, other financial statements acceptable to the Procuring Entity, for the last five (5) years to demonstrate the current soundness of the applicants financial position and its prospective long-term profitability.
10. Completion of the Dagohoy Municipal Waterworks System is required eight (8) months after effectivity of start of Project.
11. The Municipal Government of Dagohoy reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bids and Awards Committee
Engr. Ranulfo D. Sepe
BAC Chairperson
Municipal Hall
Poblacion, Dagohoy, Bohol
Cell #: (0917)3022000

(Sgd.) ENGR. RANULFO D. SEPE
BAC Chairperson

(PDI – February 6 & 13, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF DAVAO DEL NORTE
Municipality of Asuncion

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Local Government Unit of Asuncion, Davao del Norte has availed a loan from the Development Bank of the Philippines through its Bids and Awards Committee invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for re-bid of hereunder projects/contract:

NAME		APPROVED BUDGET COST
1. 11 – units XR 200 motorcycle	–	P 1,313,070.00
2. 1 – unit K2700 4 x 4 Van	–	921,862.00
3. 1 unit 4 x 4 pick up manual transmission	–	1,400,000.00
4. Seed Subsidy (Rice & Corn seeds) (Trust Fund)	–	648,000.00

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders eligibility requirements upon submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) and submit at the BAC Secretariat. Bid documents may be purchased by the eligible bidders and payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 500.00 (Special Bidders Permit) to the Office of the Municipal Treasurer.

The BAC will use the standard pass/fail criteria in the eligibility check/ screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid as required.

SCHEDULE OF BIDDING ACTIVITIES

1. Publication/Submission of LOI/Eligibility Requirements	– February 08-14, 2007
2. Eligibility Check	– February 15, 2007
3. Pre-Bid Conference	– February 16, 2007 (9:00 AM)
4. Issuance and availability of Bidding Documents	– February 17-23, 2007
5. Submission and Opening of Bids	– February 28, 2007 (9:00 AM)
6. Bid Evaluation	– March 1, 2007
7. Post Qualification	– March 2, 2007
8. Approval of Resolution/Issuance of NOA/Contract Signing/Issuance of Notice to Proceed	– March 3-8, 2007

For particulars, please contact – BAC Secretariat
Tel. No. 084-373-0239

Bidders shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the form of cash in the amount equivalent to 1% of the approved budget. BAC reserves the right to reject any and all bids at any time prior to the awarding of contract without prior notice, waive any defects or informality therein, accept the offer most advantageous to the government, and assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate indemnify to the bidders for any expenses that may be incurred in the preparation of bids.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provision of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

(Sgd.) **ERLINDA M. MATOBATO**
BAC-Chairman

(PDI–February 13, 2007)

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OBITUARIES

Death Notice

MA. PAZ E. REMO
(Mother, Teacher)
of Goa, Camarines Sur

passed away on February 9, 2007 at the age of 65.

Her body lies in state at their residence on L. Pan St., Goa, Camarines Sur.

Interment will be on February 16, 2007 at the Goa Catholic Cemetery after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at Goa Catholic Church.

Our Dearly Beloved

ERLINDA BARRAMEDA-ACORDA

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on February 10, 2007.

Her loving husband, **Vic**; children, **Vonn & Paul**; daughters-in-law, **Bheng & Luz**; grandchildren, **Gela, Ana, Luigi & Enzo**; brothers and sisters; in-laws; relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Garden Suite, Loyola Memorial Chapels & Crematorium, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be tomorrow, February 14, 2007 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City after the 1:00 pm Funeral Mass.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

RODOLFO P. TAWAS

Retiree of EDSA Central Shopping Terminal

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 9, 2007 at the age of 63.

His body lies in state at St. Claire Funeral Homes, C. Raymundo Ave., Rosario, Pasig City.

Interment will be announced later.

You are gone...
But for us you never left...
God has you in His keeping
We have you in our hearts.

EUFROSINA "LATING" MALLARI VDA. DE PALOMO

Now rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord. She joined our Creator and her loving husband P.Y. on the 10th of February 2007 at the age of 89.

Her loving children (†) **JAMES, BOB & TOOTS, NANCY** and **STELLA**, grandchildren **TIN & WATTY, ROBBIE BOY, MARICEL, MATTHEW, JR, GIA, PATEK** and great-granddaughter **AIMEE**, her relatives and friends request the readers to join with them in prayers and in thanksgiving for her wonderful life as **wife, mother, lola** and **superlola**.

Her remains can be viewed at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. She will be laid to rest tomorrow, February 14, 2007 at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Arlington's Solace Chapel.

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..."
Psalm 23:4

BUSINESS

Gov't debt seen rising to ₱3.82T in '07

Level to start falling when RP attains balanced budget position

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S outstanding debt is expected to slightly increase to P3.923 trillion by the end of this year from the unofficial estimate of P3.914 billion as of end-2006.

Finance officials said the debt level would start declining once the targeted balanced zero deficit was attained in 2008.

The government's debt has been rising because of the budget deficits that should be covered by borrowings, they said.

The country has been registering budget deficits since 1998 as a result of the Asian financial crisis, which resulted in lower corporate incomes and, therefore, reduced tax collection. The gap further widened due to the pump-priming policy adopted by the Estrada administration.

For this year, the government set its budget deficit ceiling at P63 billion, lower than the P125-billion ceiling for 2006.

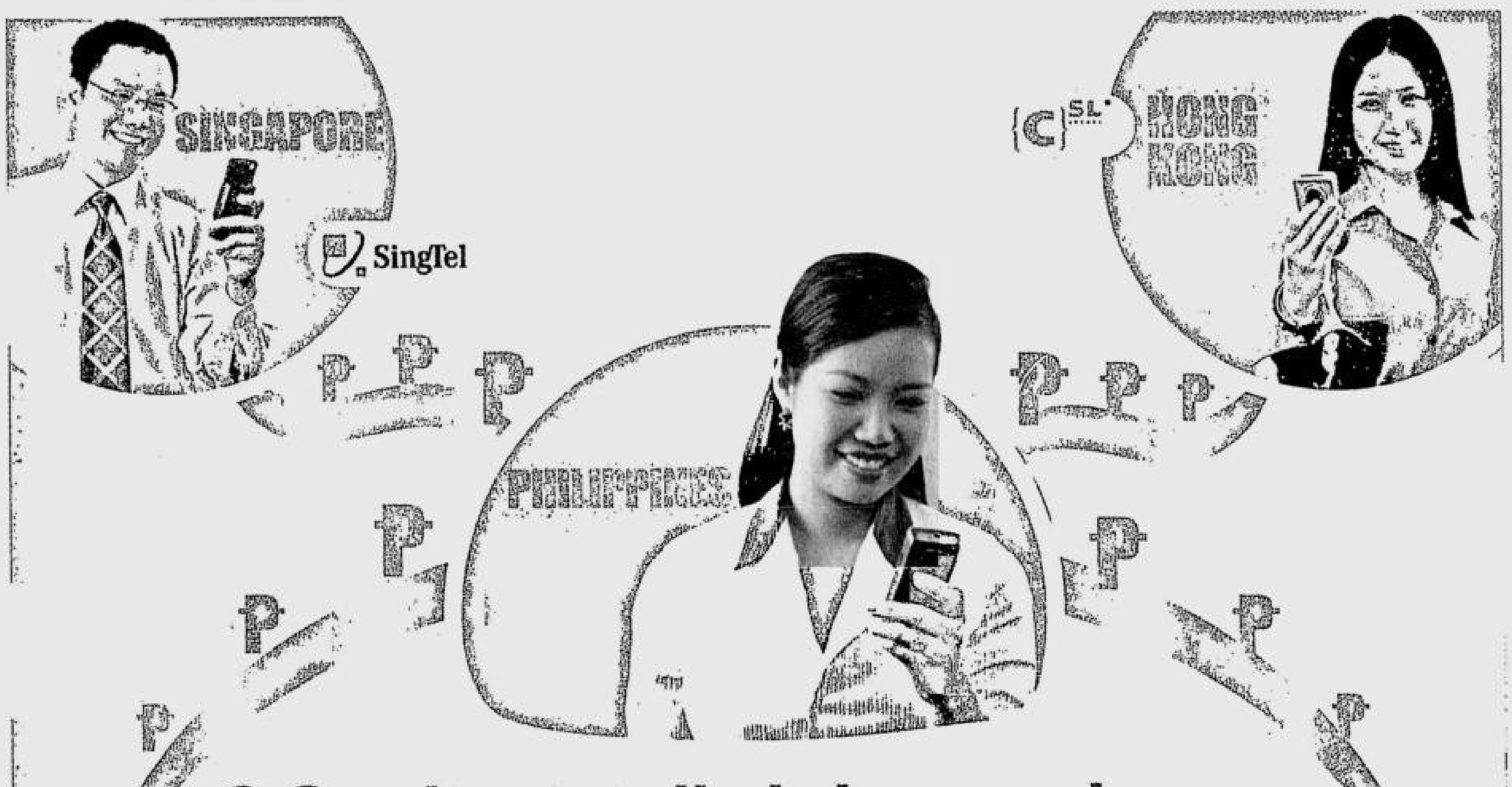
The huge debt of the national government was the reason cited by credit-rating agencies for their reluctance to upgrade the Philippines' ratings, which remained several notches below investment grade.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the reduction of the debt to sustainable levels would be the government's fiscal policy once it achieved a balanced budget position in 2008.

A "sustainable" level of debt is defined by credit-rating firms as being equal to about 50 percent of a country's gross domestic product (GDP). In the case of the Philippines, however, the national government's debt still hovers around 70 percent of the GDP.

GDP is the value of all goods and services produced within the economy in a given period.

Estimates by the DOF showed that should the government achieve a balanced budget by 2008, its debt would fall to P3.872 trillion during the year. It is expected to further decline to P3.84 trillion in 2009 and to P3.82 trillion in 2010.



GCash unveils inter-exchange m-commerce hub at 3GSM World Congress

GCash, the revolutionary award-winning electronic payment system from G-Xchange, Inc. (GXI) –a wholly owned subsidiary of Globe Telecom– is making international m-commerce inter-operability a reality with its latest innovation currently showcased at the prestigious 3GSM World Congress in Barcelona, Spain.

GCash first gained worldwide attention when it won in the Best Messaging Service category at the 2005 GSM Awards. It is an integrated mobile payment system that transforms the mobile phone into a wallet for a secure, fast, convenient, accessible, and low-cost means of making money transfers and micro payments for utility bills, tuition fees, donations, and even prepaid airtime wherever subscribers are in the world. The panel of judges, made up of the world's biggest names in telecommunications, hailed GCash as "a promisingly innovative and convenient m-commerce solution."

Now, GCash lives up to that promise by unveiling the first direct inter-operable m-commerce platform expanding its capability by creating an inter-exchange hub that allows instant multi-language and multi-currency money transfer to partner mobile operators around the world.

GXI and its technology partner, UTIBA, joined hands with mobile operators Singtel in Singapore, CSL in Hong Kong, Maxis in Malaysia, and a Norwegian telco to showcase a Proof of Concept highlighting the interconnection of various m-commerce platforms to enable mobile subscribers to make remittances using their mobile phones almost anywhere in the world via SMS through their local SIMs.

The execution with Singtel and CSL, for example, is a Cross Border Single Currency Remittance platform that lets Singapore and Hong Kong-based subscribers send Philippine Pesos to and from a Globe Telecom or Touch Mobile subscriber.

For the 3GSM showcase, GCash also interconnects with Maxis and a Norwegian telco to showcase the ability of its inter-exchange hub to link various m-commerce platforms around the world. With this service, Maxis customers would be able to remit Maxis E-Money to GCash users in the Philippines via Cross Border Multi Currency Remittance. The transfer would be initiated through SMS for remittance in Malaysian Ringgit and received by the Globe or Touch Mobile customer in Philippine Pesos.

"This hub concept would allow us both to make our innovative services available cross-border," said Maxis m-commerce product manager Claire Featherstone.

"GCash has once again raised the standard of technological innovation towards uplifting people's lives. The direct connection between various m-commerce platforms globally through our inter-exchange hub is a crucial step towards making m-commerce accessible to everyone everywhere," said GXI president Rizza Maniego-Eala.

The showcase was also made possible with the collaboration of GXI's technology partner UTIBA, a company dedicated to creating innovative software solutions for Mobile Operators and Financial Institutions.

"UTIBA's partnership with Globe Telecom and its subsidiary, GXI, has produced creative solutions that enable more people to make payments and other mobile transactions simply and intuitively, anytime and anywhere," said UTIBA CEO Richard Matotek.

Simultaneous with this showcase, Globe Telecom is also participating in a GSM Association program to develop a global hub that will link up regional or national mobile remittance systems to enable people to transfer money across the world as easily as they can make an international telephone call.

"The Philippines is at the forefront of innovation around the convergence of mobile and financial services," said Ben Soppitt, strategic initiatives director of the GSMA, "and we are delighted that Globe Telecom is bringing its expertise and experience in this exciting field to support the development of our global mobile money transfer program."

The 3GSM World Congress, the world's largest exhibition and congress for the mobile industry, is a highly-anticipated annual event that gathers the top GSM telecommunications operators from around the world.

Globe taps new loan worth $50M to pay old debts

By Riza T. Olchondra

GLOBE TELECOM HAS SIGNED A DEAL with Norddeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale of Germany for a $50-million loan that will be used by the telco to refinance old debts.

The deal was signed last Feb. 9 in Singapore.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Globe treasury division head Alberto de Larrazabal said the loan was a five-year facility with a floating interest rate.

Also, Globe will issue P5 billion worth of corporate notes. The telco has tapped the local unit of Standard Chartered Bank to underwrite the issuance.

The telco was planning to settle about $300 million worth of existing bonds in April, five years before maturity, using the proceeds from the notes issuance, the $50-million loan from the German bank and internal funds.

This was confirmed by Globe chief financial officer Delfin C. Gonzales Jr. in a text message.

"We expect to realize significant savings if we prepay the notes and refinance it at current interest rates," Gonzales said in an earlier briefing.

He said Globe was expected to save P2.32 billion in interest expense over the remaining life of the old notes.

The notes, which were secured in 2002, would be falling due in in 2012. They were, however, built with a call option that gave the telco the flexibility to redeem the notes should interest rates fall.

BSP expected to review 3-tiered interest rates on overnight money

By Doris C. Dumlao

CREDIT SUISSE EXPECTS THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas to fine-tune its three-tiered interest rate system on overnight money soon by raising its lowest interest rate to prevent a potential volatility of the peso.

In a commentary dated Jan. 23, the Swiss bank said short-term interest rates in the country had been effectively reduced by 300 basis points since the BSP revived the tiering system last November.

"The current monetary policy stance does not leave more room for further easing. At under 5 percent, money market yields are barely positive in real terms, and so are real rates on short-term treasury bills," Credit Suisse said.

Under the tiering system, the BSP pays a lower rate on overnight money placed by banks in excess of certain threshold levels to encourage banks to lend out instead of parking all their funds with the central bank. Only the first P5 billion of short-term money placed with the BSP gets an overnight borrowing rate of 7.5 percent. The next P5 billion yields 200 basis points less at 5.5 percent, and funds in excess of P10 billion get only 3.5 percent.

Credit Suisse believes the only meaningful step the BSP could take would be to raise the lowest rate offered under the tiering system.

The lowest tier sets the floor for local money market yields, which in turn affect the attractiveness of holding on to peso assets versus those denominated in other currencies.

Abacus unit, Solar Resources sign agreement

PHILIPPINE REGIONAL INVESTMENT DEVELopment Corp. (Pride), a subsidiary of Abacus Consolidated Resources and Holdings Inc., has signed an agreement with property firm Solar Resources Inc. for the development of Pride's 120-hectare property in Pinamucan Point, Batangas.

Under the agreement Pride will contribute the land to be developed while Solar will provide the facilities and technical know-how in the construction and development work.

Construction and development will start as soon as the necessary permits and clearances are obtained and is expected to be completed within four years from commencement, the company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Solar Resources is the property development arm of media firm Solar Entertainment Corp.

Company officials said the project cost has yet to be determined. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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IN THIS ISSUE

▨ **Milk can prevent** disease /C3
▨ **All fired up** /C4

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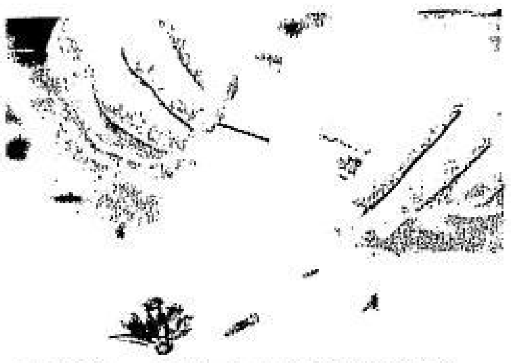
Labor of love

BUNDLES of fresh flowers go through inspection by US Customs and Border Protection agriculture specialists. AFP



A BUG found in the flowers is placed in a glass tube for closer examination. AFP

EVEN the loveliest of roses are not spared from airport manhandling to check for harmful bugs. AFP

IT CERTAINLY ISN'T A FUNNY Valentine for United States Customs and Border Protection agriculture specialists when the Miami international airport in Florida becomes a bottleneck of roses this time of the year. Every day the week before Valentine's Day, almost 100,000 boxes of fresh flowers have to be checked for pests and diseases that could damage US agriculture crops. The airport handles 86 percent of all floral imports into the US, mostly from South America.

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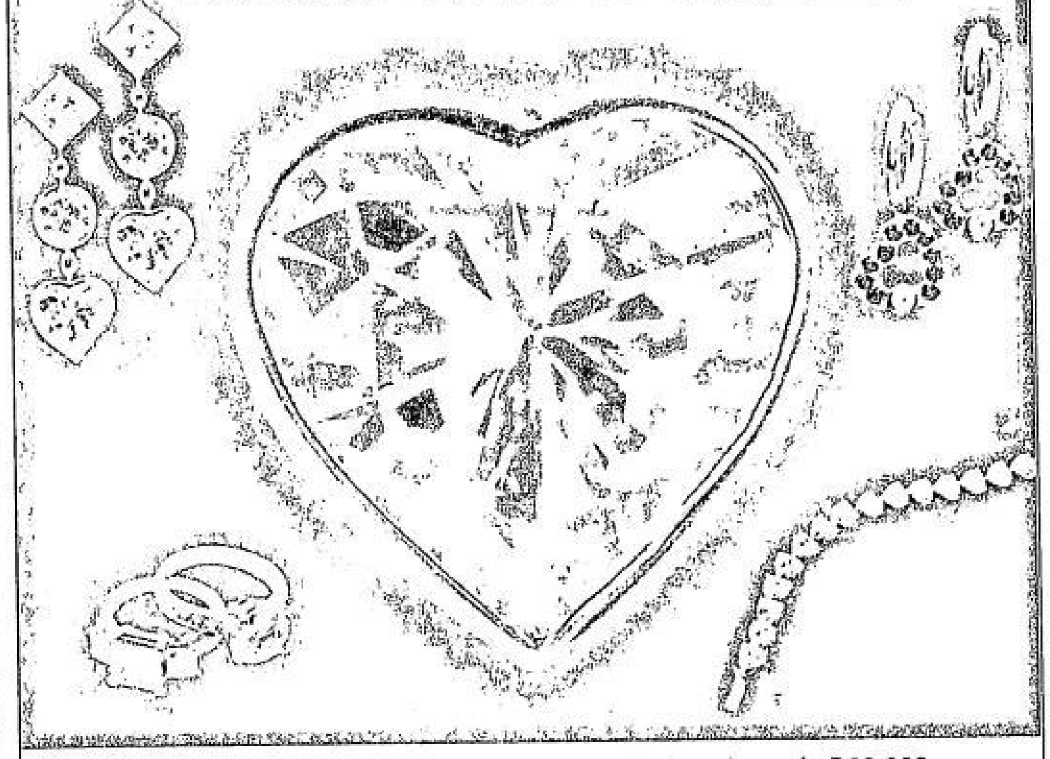

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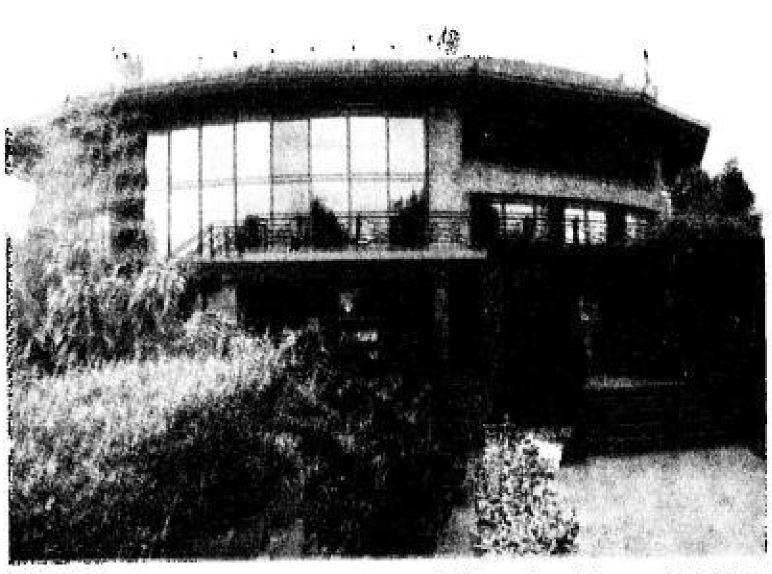
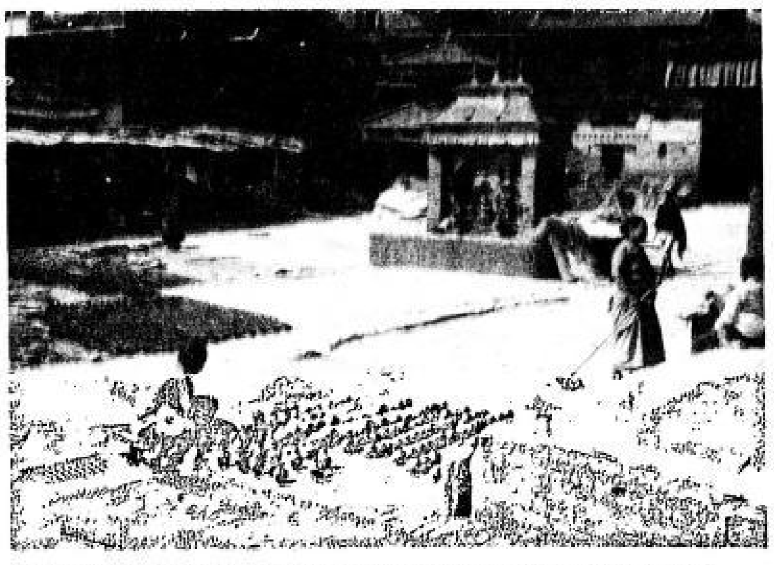

THE FIVE-STAR Club Himalaya Resort in Nagarkot is located 7,200 ft above sea level.

CENTURY-OLD watering hole inside the palace in Bhaktapur Durbar Square


ANOTHER square in Bhaktapur where locals sell pottery, herbs, brass items and wheat

Discovering my own Shangri-la

Part 2

THE MIND-BOGGLING SWAYAMBHUnath Stupa, said to be 2,000 years old and the oldest in Nepal, is one of the most glorious Buddhist *chaityas* (shrine). You'll be amazed at the paintings on the four sides of the spire's base—huge, glaring, all-seeing eyes of the Lord Buddha.

The temple is three kilometers away from Kathmandu and is on a hill overlooking Kathmandu valley, thus giving an an awesome view of the capital.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

The incredible Bhaktapur Durbar (palace) Square, included in the World Heritage Sites list of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is a small city-like plaza. You enter through the Golden Gate, considered one of the most beautiful and intricately carved gates in the world.

The palace, built in 1427, has 55 windows of wood and stone with rich carvings.

Walking around you'll find many temples and examples of architectural splendor: the National Art Gallery, National Woodworking Museum, and Brass and Bronze Museum.

The bronze bell at the terrace of the stone temple of Batsala Devi was rung to signal curfew in the 1700s.

Shopper's delight

Shopping outside the palace grounds will drive you delirious with delight—pottery, brass, copper, Tibetan trinkets and jewelry, colorful beaded necklaces, eye-catching dyed fabrics, and antique reproductions.

Dinner at the Dwarika's Hotel's renowned Krishnarpan, a Nepalese restaurant, (hosted by the hotel's GM), gave a glimpse of the old civilization and the exotic tradition of the Himalayas. Your choices range from a six-course meal for US$22 to a 22-course dinner for US$34. Definitely a gastronomic experience for anyone, *palanggas*.

After a quick lunch, we had the obligatory visit to Kathmandu Durbar square, historical seat of royalty. Kings of Nepal were crowned here. The square's old palaces and 50 temples showed us the deep religious and cultural life of the people.

We all looked forward to an overnight stay at the fantastic Club Himalaya Nagarkot Resort, so near yet so far from the hustle and bustle of the city. Just an hour-and-a-half drive from Kathmandu and you'll find this exquisite five-star resort, which is 7,200 ft above sea level.

Believe me, the nerve-wracking, zigzag drive to the resort is well worth it, dahlings.

Mesmerizing

On the way up we stopped at another beautiful World Heritage Site, the temple at Changu Narayan. We were mesmerized by the oldest temple in the valley, said to be about 1,600 years old and situated on a hill, with a panoramic view of the beautiful green fields. On a clear day, you can see the peaks of the Himalayan Mountains.

The people's laid-back lifestyle and the architecture of their homes will make any photographer happy. Children play, men sit together chatting, while women clean newly harvested corn.

The Nagarkot Resort is renowned for its panoramic view of the Himalayas. The beautiful Club Himalaya left us speechless. Guests from around the world go there for the main purpose of watching daybreak with the Himalayas as backdrop.

To be able to wake up before 5 a.m. to see the spectacular sunrise had us rushing to bed early. A quarter to 5 a.m., we were all bundled up against the cold as we stood at the huge terrace with other tourists, cameras ready to capture the fantastic site.

As the sun rose in the horizon the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas started to appear, and the colors changed gradually from a light pink to pale-orange color. Finally, we got a view of the awesome Himalayas, from the peak of Mt. Annapurna to Mount Everest. It was picture-perfect. Wow, an experience that will never be forgotten!

Casino Royal

After a healthy breakfast and still dazzled by the one-of-a-kind sunrise, we went back to Kathmandu, and checked in at Hotel Yak & Yeti. The five-star deluxe oasis has a newly designed structure was annexed to the 100-year-old palace to house Kathmandu's Casino Royal, which is open 24 hours.

When we arrived, the lobby was packed with tourists, most of them just coming back from trekking in different Himalayan peaks. No wonder Nepal is known as the ultimate destination for the trekking enthusiast, earning it the title "Trekkers Paradise."

Since it was our last day in Kathmandu, we dashed off to go shopping.

It's amazing how inexpensive things are in Nepal. There are tons of things to buy, from gorgeous embroidered suede bags and wallets, to giant shells with sterling silver inlay, different kinds of colorful pashmina, bracelets, all sorts of gem stones, gorgeous fabrics, plus a lot more. Incredible, dahlings!

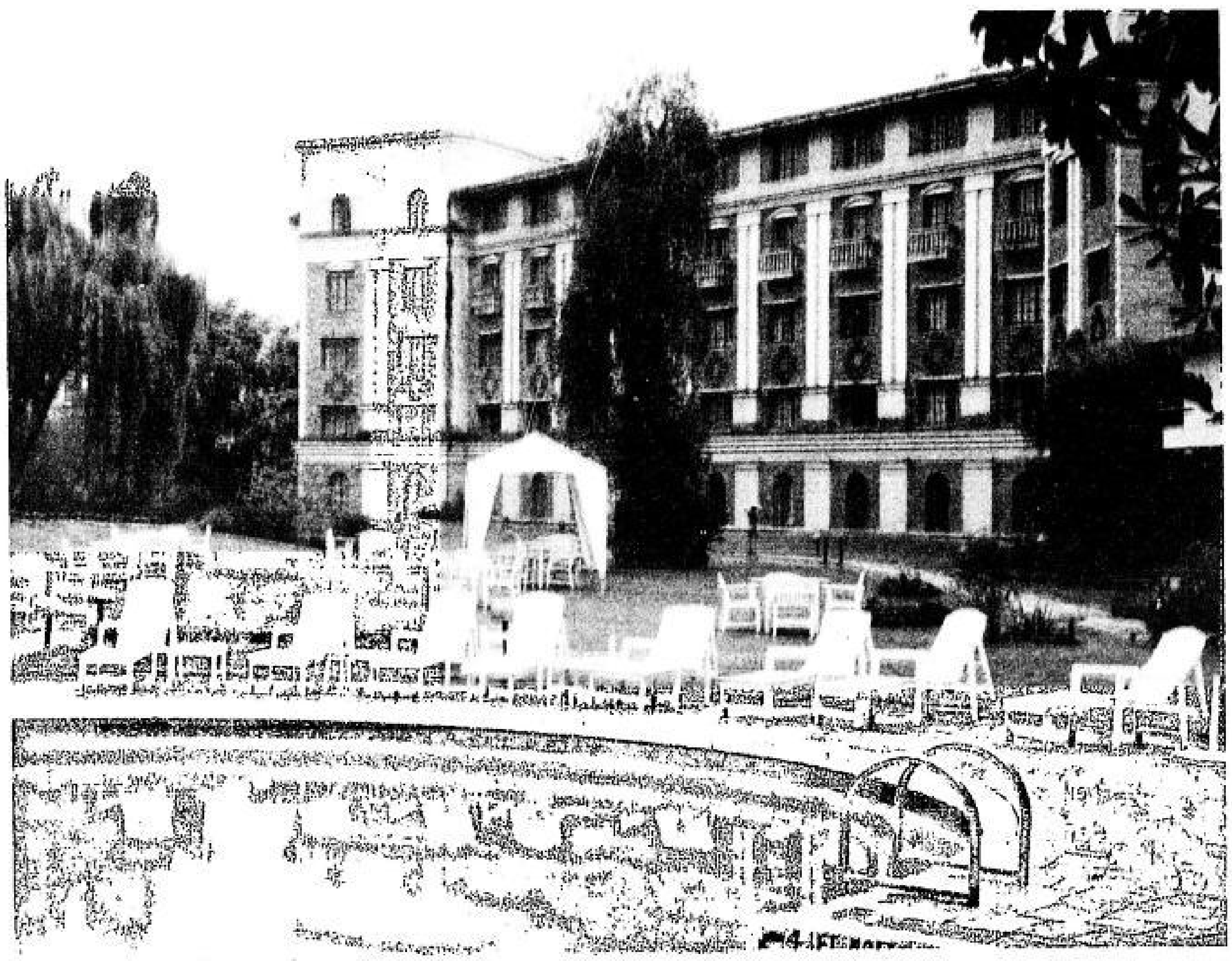
Next morning we left with real heavy hearts aboard Royal Nepal Airlines for Hong Kong, staying overnight at a hotel in Disneyland. The flight home on Philippine Airlines was smooth, *natch*.

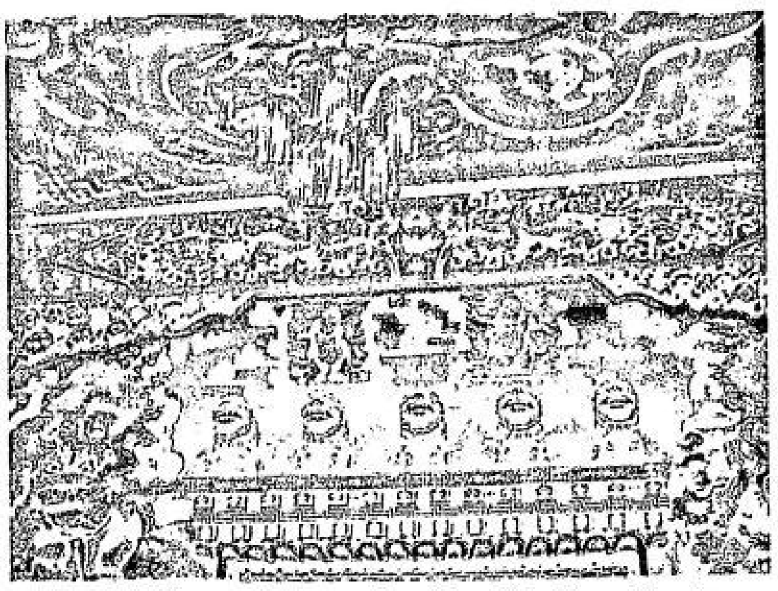
Yes, people, Nepal, a holiday hotspot anchored on the Himalayas, is intriguing and fascinating. The culture is so rich, the people genial and the country absolutely beautiful. It's no wonder that some people call it Shangri-La discovered.

PAL's Swingaround package to Nepal includes round-trip economy-class airfare with a stop in Hong Kong or Bangkok, airport-hotel-transfer, three-night hotel accommodation, and daily buffet and tours.

For more info on this fantastic PAL Swingaround package to exciting, exotic destinations in Asia, call Philippine Airlines reservation at 8557777 or check out philippineairlines.com. Also check the Nepal Tourism Board's website, www.welcomenepal.com.

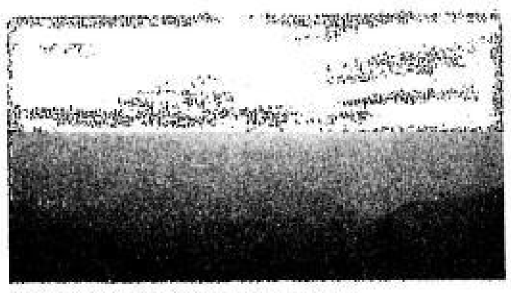
You'll never regret it, dahlings.

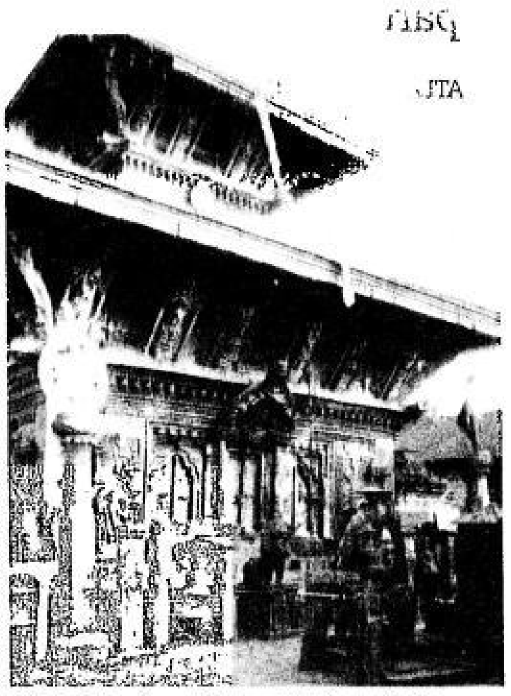

HOTEL Yak & Yeti's new wing


INTRICATE Tibetan painting on the ceiling of Bhaktapur Temple

WELCOMING a new day at the Club Himalaya Resort

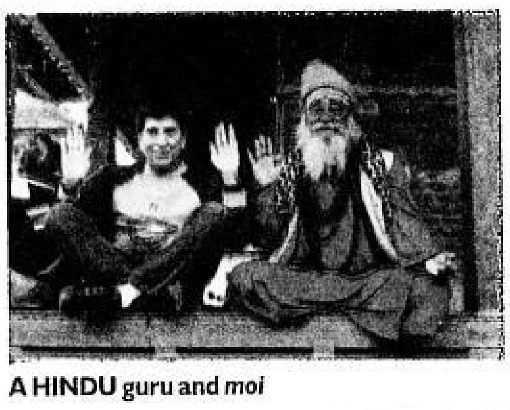
DINNER at Kathmandu's renowned Bhojan Griha, one of the finest Nepali restaurants, on the last day of our visit, hosted by Shiva Travel's managing director Arjun Sharma (second from right)

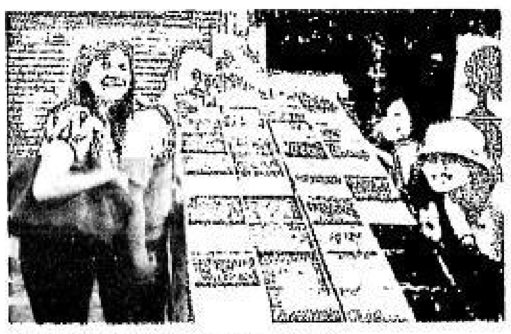

GORGEOUS Himalayan sunrise

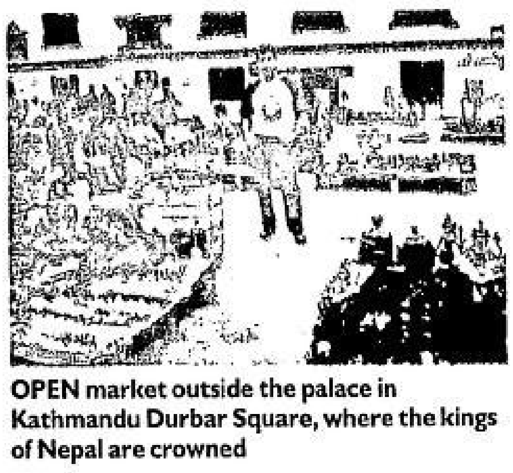

ONE of the beautiful smaller temples in Swayambhunath, nicknamed the "Monkey Temple"

NYATAPOLA at the Bhaktapur Durbar Square is the tallest temple in Nepal.

GARLANDS of flowers are sold at the square.


A HINDU *guru* and *moi*


NATURAL colors to "dye" for


OPEN market outside the palace in Kathmandu Durbar Square, where the kings of Nepal are crowned

HELPFUL Philippine Airlines crew: purser Trixie Halaguena, flight attendant Sandro Santos, flight trainer Ana Zuniga, and flight attendants Rene Herrera and Liza Santos

NEPAL Tourism Board director Nandini Lahe-Thapa with media consultant Sarad Pradhan, our hosts

TOURISM promotions officer Shradha Shrestha

Autism rate higher in US, about 1:150

Research gives the clearest picture yet of how common the problem is in some parts of the country

ATLANTA—ABOUT ONE IN 150 AMERICAN children has autism, making it an urgent public health concern, said US health officials Thursday who reported on the largest study done so far on the troubling disorder.

The new numbers, based on 2002 data from 14 states, are higher than previously reported.

Advocates said the study provides a sad new understanding of how common autism is, and should fuel efforts to get the government to spend hundreds of millions of additional dollars for autism research and services.

"This data today shows we're going to need more early intervention services and more therapists, and we're going to need federal and state legislators to stand up for these families," said Alison Singer, spokeswoman for Autism Speaks, the nation's largest organization advocating more services for autistic children.

The study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calculated an average autism rate of 6.6 per 1,000. That compares with last year's estimated rate of 5.5 per 1,000.

The research involved an intense review of medical and school records for children in all or part of 14 states and gives the clearest picture yet of how common autism is in some parts of the country, CDC officials said.

However, those states are not demographically representative of the nation as a whole, so officials cautioned against using the results as a national average. The study does not include some of the most populous states like California, Texas and Florida.

Also, the study does not answer whether autism is increasing—a controversial topic, driven in part by the contention by some parents and advocates that autism is linked to a vaccine preservative. The best scientific studies have not borne out that claim.

"We can't make conclusions about trends yet," because the study's database is too new, said Catherine Rice, a CDC behavioral scientist who was the study's lead author.

Autism is a complex disorder usually not diagnosed in children until after age 3. It is characterized by a range of behaviors, including difficulty in expressing needs and inability to socialize. The cause is not known.

Cause still unknown

Scientists have been revising how common they think the disorder is. Past estimates from smaller studies have ranged from 1 out of every 10,000 children to nearly 1 in 100.

Last year's estimate of 5.5 out of every 1,000 US children was based on national surveys of tens of thousands of families with school-age children. That fit into a prevalence range found in other recent studies.

The CDC also has been developing an alternate way of measuring autism prevalence, building a network of university and state health departments for ongoing surveillance of autism and developmental disabilities. The study released Thursday is one of the first scientific papers to come out of that effort.

"This is a more accurate rate because of the methods they used," said Dr. Eric Hollander, an autism expert at New York's Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

The study involved 2002 data from parts or all of 14 states—Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Researchers looked specifically at children who were 8 years old that year. They said most children with autism are identified for medical or educational services by that age.

The researchers checked health records in each area and school records when they were made available, looking for children who met diagnostic criteria for autism. They used those numbers to calculate a prevalence rate for each study area.

The rates varied from 3.3 per 1,000 in the study site in Alabama, which was made up of the state's 32 northernmost counties, to 10.6 in the site in New Jersey, which involved four counties, including metropolitan Newark.

Researchers say they do not know why the rate was so high in New Jersey. They think the Alabama rate was low at least partly because researchers had limited access to special education records there.

AP

The 'complete food' as disease fighter

By Vangie Baga-Reyes

MILK IS SAID TO BE the complete food, especially for children.

Health advocates believe it can be made even better by fortifying it with micro-nutrients like zinc, selenium and iron.

A recent international study published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) found that fortified milk powder prevented major childhood diseases, particularly diarrhea and pneumonia.

World Health Organization statistics show diarrhea is a leading cause of sickness and death among young children. Loss of nutrients from diarrhea can make children weak and malnourished, stunting their physical growth and lowering resistance to diseases.

Acute lower respiratory infection (ALRI), including pneumonia, is another leading cause of sickness and deaths in young children.

Global figures show diarrhea causes 18 percent of the annual 10.6 million deaths of children less than five years, while pneumonia accounts for 19 percent of those deaths.

India-based study

Dr. Sunil Sazawal, who conducted the study in India reported by the BMJ, said the findings would help in assessing child health globally. Sazawal is an expert on child nutrition and associate research professor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, United States.

"The study is intended to answer the question of the health impact of using milk to deliver certain micro-nutrients," said Sazawal, a recent Manila visitor.

CHILD nutrition expert Dr. Sunil Sazawal and Anchor nutrition manager Rebecca Cannan

The study involved 633 children aged 1-3 years old from a section of New Delhi, India's capital. The kids were divided into two groups: one group receiving fortified milk powder, the other non-fortified.

The group that received fortified milk seemed better protected against diarrhea and respiratory ailment than the other group.

Aside from needing less antibiotics, children who consumed fortified milk were also found to be better protected against acute respiratory illness, severe fever and other illnesses.

"The milk was given on a daily basis for a period of one year," Sazawal said. "Parents didn't have any idea what (kind of milk) their kids were getting. Essentially, we found a significant reduction in diarrhea and pneumonia cases among children under age 5."

All children in the study received the same amount of energy, protein, carbohydrates and fat from the two types of milk. Children also received other foods. This suggested to the researcher that the benefits of fortified milk could be expected even in moderately well-fed children.

Fortification works

"The research underlines the goodness of dairy and shows that, by fortifying a staple food like milk, we can ultimately assist in the prevention of serious illnesses," Sazawal said.

The research was supported by Fonterra, maker of Anchor 1+ with Nutri-Care, which is fortified with vitamins A, C, E and the minerals iron, zinc and selenium. Developed in New Zealand, the milk powders are sold in Asia and the Middle East.

The study was part of Fonterra's efforts to formulate nutritious dairy products through its Anchor Institute, which supports independent research to set benchmarks for products aimed at promoting child health and nutrition.

"Milk is a very nutritious food on its own," said Rebecca Cannan, nutrition manager for Anchor Institute. "It has calcium, protein, Vitamins A, B and C. But it still does not contain all the nutrients needed to protect kids from common illnesses.

Cannan said, "It's quite difficult to get all the nutrients we need... That's the advantage of fortified milk. It contains all the nutrients our body needs."

Anchor 1+ for kids aged 1-3 has been in the market since 2001. It was reformulated and further improved based on the results of the study. Anchor, marketed in Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan as Fernleaf, is sold in over 65 countries worldwide. Its range of products includes milk (liquid and powder), butter, cheese and yoghurt.

Sazawal's paper can be viewed at www.bmj.com.

FONTERRA'S Anchor 1+ is fortified with vitamins A, C, E and minerals.

IT'S PARTY TIME!
JOIN
EQ
ECONOMY & QUALITY
Birthday Party
Raffle Promo
Dry
XL
EQ
KID'S PARTY
CELEBRATE YOUR BABY'S BIRTHDAY AT JOLLIBEE FOR FREE, WITH EQ'S BIRTHDAY PARTY RAFFLE PROMO!

PROMO MECHANICS

A. PROMO PERIOD: JANUARY 1 - MARCH 31, 2007

B. PURCHASE REQUIREMENTS:

1) You can participate in the nationwide raffle promo by submitting the required EQ packs such as EQ Basic (with 100% Breathable Cover and Side Leak Guards), EQ Plus, EQ Colors and EQ Dry (with Cloth-like Cover) in an envelope, together with the information sheet that contains your name, address, contact numbers, signature and your baby's name, birthday and age.

2) Entries may be submitted through a) drop boxes deployed in selected supermarkets/groceries nationwide; b) major Jollibee Party Stores; and, c) mailing or hand-carrying to JSU Office at any of the following branches:

1) JSU MAIN OFFICE
JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc.
31st Floor Raffles Corporate Center
Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center,
Pasig City 1605

2) JSU CEBU
JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc. – Cebu
Lot 2 Blk. 9 M.L. Quezon Ave. Castalos Compound, Cabangcalan, Mandaue City,
Cebu 6014

3) JSU CDO
JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc. – Warehouse
Kevin Ent. Warehouse Zone 4 Bayabas Road,
Cagayan de Oro City 9000

3) One (1) RAFFLE ENTRY is equivalent to any of the following EQ packs:

A. EQ Basic Baby Diapers	No. of Packs Required
EQ Basic Singles (1)	4
EQ Basic/ EQ Plus Mini Packs (4s)	2
EQ Basic/ EQ Plus Budget Pack (12s)	1
EQ Basic/ EQ Plus Big Pack (36s, 32s, 28s, 24s)	1
B. EQ Colors Baby Diapers	
EQ Colors Mini Packs (4s)	2
EQ Colors Budget Pack (18s, 16s, 14s, 12s)	1

C. EQ Dry Baby Diapers	No. of Packs Required
EQ Dry Mini Packs (4s)	2
EQ Dry Travel Pack (22s, 20s, 18s, 16s, 14s)	1
EQ Dry Econo Pack (40s, 36s, 32s, 28s)	1
EQ Dry Jumbo Pack (60s, 54s, 48s, 42s)	1
EQ Dry Mega Pack (84s, 72s)	1

4) Each entry should contain the number of corresponding EQ packs. Chosen entry with incomplete number of packs will be disqualified.

C. RAFFLE PRIZES:

Each winner will receive one (1) Jollibee Birthday Party Certificate worth Six Thousand Pesos (P6,000) and one (1) Birthday Party Cake certificate worth Five Hundred Pesos (P500).

D. DRAW SCHEDULES:

1) Entries will be classified into five (5) areas: NCR, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

2) You are required to drop your entries within the area covered by your mailing address. Otherwise, winning entries will be disqualified. (e.g. 123 Gov. Pack Rd. cor. Upper Session Rd. Baguio City should be submitted at any North Luzon dropbox centers only).

3) Deadline for submission of entries and the corresponding draw dates are as follows:

	Deadline of Submission	Draw Date	No. of Winners
1st Monthly Draw	Jan. 31, 2007	Feb. 9, 2007, 3PM	60 winners
2nd Monthly Draw	Feb. 28, 2007	Mar. 9, 2007, 3PM	60 winners
Grand Draw	Mar. 31, 2007	Apr. 10, 2007, 3PM	100 winners

4) All entries will be drawn at the following JSU Offices at exactly 3 o'clock in the afternoon and will be attended by JSU and DTI representatives.
a) For GMA and Luzon Entries - JSU Pasig Warehouse
b) For Visayas Entries - JSU Cebu
c) For Mindanao Entries - JSU CDO

5) For the 1st and 2nd Monthly Draws, 10 Free Birthday Party Packages will be given in each of the 5 areas (i.e., GMA, South Luzon, North Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao). For the Grand Draw, 20 Free Birthday Party Packages will be given per area.

6) Promo participants can only win once within the entire promo duration. Non-winning entries in the 1st and 2nd Monthly Draws will still be included in the Grand Draw.

7) Entries thru mail will only be accepted until the following date and time for each draw:
a) 1st Draw: February 8, 2007, 5PM
b) 2nd Draw: March 8, 2007, 5PM
c) Grand Draw: April 10, 2007, 9AM

E. CLAIMING OF PRIZES:

1) Winners in each draw will be announced in major broadsheets.

2) Within a week after each draw, all winners will be informed through a NOTIFICATION LETTER which will be delivered straight to their houses through Worklink. Worklink will present all the acknowledgement receipts to JSU.

3) Winners can claim their Jollibee birthday party certificates from February 8, 2007 to October 31, 2007 at any of the specified JSU offices near their location.
a) After the redemption period, JSU will mail the prizes through courier.
b) Said service partner shall present the acknowledgement receipts to JSU.

4) Winners will be asked to present their notification letter plus 2 valid IDs for verification purposes.

5) Winners can use their birthday party certificates at their chosen Jollibee party store from **February 8, 2007 to December 31, 2008** only.

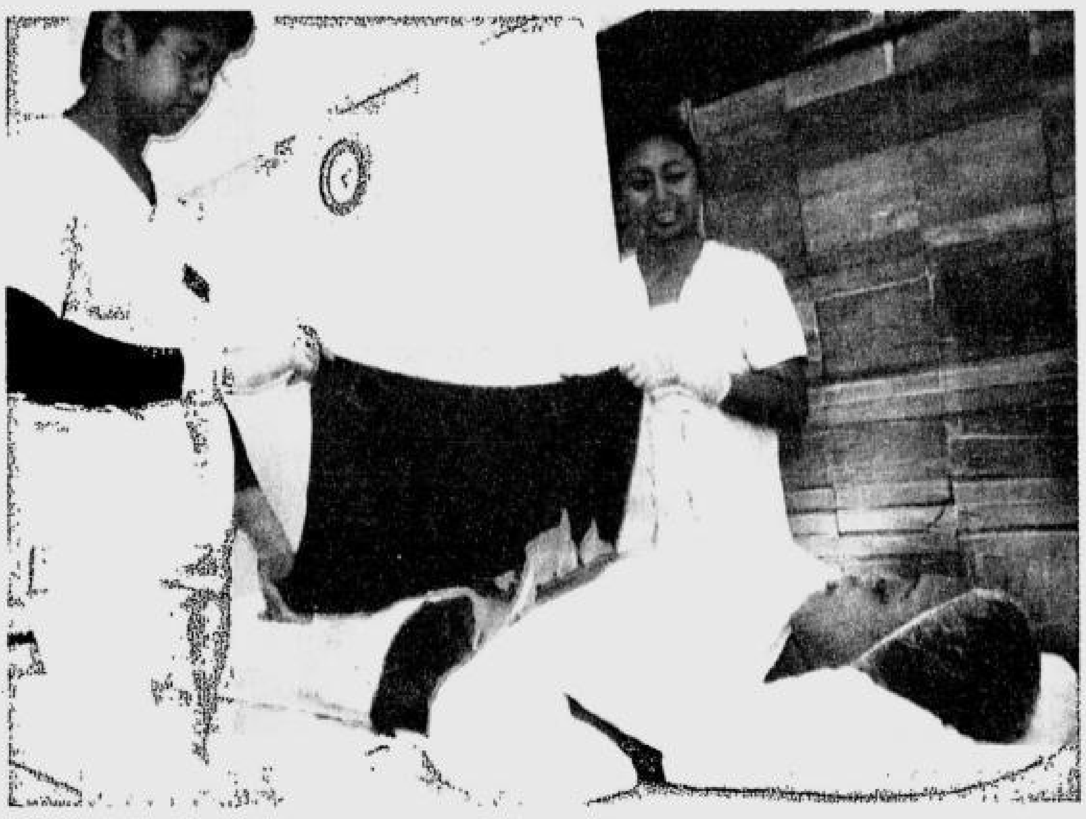
6) Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash.

7) Employees of UNITRADE and JOLLIBEE, its advertising agencies and suppliers, including their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the Raffle Promo.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4960, Series of 2006.

Where there is fire

By Anne A. Jambora



MELTING POT. Burn fat the easy way. Glicel E. Galvez, above, says fire therapy is effective in melting away stubborn fat deposits from "problem" areas in the body, such as the belly, legs and arms. The woman, at left, who was measured before and after the treatment, lost two inches off her waistline after a single session. AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

WOMAN, VANITY IS thy name, once wrote The Bard. Just how far would you push yourself to pursue a sexier bod? Would you go under fire?

There is a new treatment in town called the Meridian Fire Therapy. It is grounded on one of the basic traditional Chinese medicinal theories relating to the composition and evolution of the physical universe: The power behind all transformation within the mind, body and spirit is fueled by fire.

"Fire promotes heat," said Glicel E. Galvez, operations manager of the Blue Water Day Spa, where the fire therapy is offered exclusively for now. "Heat, combined with the right traditional Chinese herbs and essences, aids in melting away acid buildup, toxins and fatty deposits."

Water is important in detoxifying the body, but for toxins to move out, the heat element is essential. Blood flow increases in heated areas. Where there is an increased blood flow, there is an increased supply of nutrients and removal of toxins.

Age-old procedure

According Galvez, the treatment, supposedly adopted from age-old Tibetan medicine, is also effective in providing remedy to ailments such as arthritis, rheumatism, cramps, back pains, and even sexual impotence in men and fertilization in women.

The rather radical procedure, although noninvasive and nonsurgical, is not really that complicated.

When a specific body part has been preheated with hot towel, the therapist begins to massage through thumb and knuckle press using Fat Burn Essence and Super Contour Cream. A Catalysis Spray is applied to relax the area before it's all set for the real deal.

Dry, damp and wet towels are layered. A formulation of 95 percent alcohol is applied on the outer wet towel before the therapist whips out a torch lighter and sets the towel on fire. After a maximum of five exposures to the fire—each lasting about 10 seconds, depending on tolerance—the area is once again massaged. In 30 minutes, the treatment is over.

There are two fire therapy procedures: the Meridian Therapy Massage, a treatment to body ailments; and Body Slimming. Each area costs P2,500 per treatment.

"Many spas offer whole-body massage. The Meridian Fire Therapy is a treatment for specific areas of the body," Galvez said.

Safety

Since it involves a very volatile element, safety precautions are taken to ensure the safety of the clients and the therapists. Treatment rooms maintain good air circulation with absolutely no leaking alcohol in sight that might catch fire.

The therapist and his/her assistant must have no traces of alcohol in their hands. Alcohol must never spill outside the wet towel area. A bucket of water is nearby in case of emergency.

"In our experience, there has never been an accident, not even a minor injury," she said.

It is important, too, that clients understand the varying heat levels they will go through during the treatment. Medical history, allergies, stress level tolerance, etc., are gathered during consultation prior to treatment schedule.

The traditional Chinese medicine applied during massage depends on the kind of treatment a client seeks. Oil essences and creams will vary, for instance, for people with arthritis to those who want to be rid of their fat deposits.

Among the herbal ingredient profile are cassiae semen, a natural-acting laxative for chronic constipation; dried citrus peel to strengthen the spleen, saffron crocus to promote vaginal circulation, Chinese caterpillar fungus to treat impotence, kansuii radix to cure bloating.

Galvez said the application of fire propels the herbs to penetrate deep into the skin and directly deliver to the targeted tissues the desired effect.

Galvez, who went through the treatment herself when she trained in Hong Kong last year, said a mild discomfort would usually be experienced at the start of the treatment but would disappear after a few seconds. And, no, the skin would not burn; it would turn red but not tender.

The procedure, she added, is so safe that it can be performed on a daily basis.

A chronic back pain that had plagued her for a year disappeared after one treatment, she said, and she lost an inch on her waistline.

And was she able to keep the extra inch off her waist? Um, she couldn't tell for sure, she admitted. To maintain the new figure, she said, the good old-fashioned balanced diet and regular exercise still do the trick. But if clients can't follow the golden rule, she said 10 consecutive days of treatment assures a permanent inch loss.

Blue Water Day Spa has branches in Alabang, Makati, Greenhills and Mother Ignacia, QC.

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

Is there a connection between food and spirituality?

HERE'S AN INTERESTING QUESTION from reader John Morales on the connection between the food we eat, psychic ability and spirituality.

"I read in your book 'The Powers of Your Inner Mind' that when one abstained from eating certain foods, one could improve his psychic ability.

"This makes me wonder if there is a direct link between diet and deep spirituality. If so, does it make the practice of vegetarianism by Buddhists the correct path to spirituality?

"Is it then correct to hypothesize that one can more easily get what he is wishing for if he abstains from certain foods? And also from such mundane things as watching too much television? Will this (vegetarianism) do wonders if coupled with meditation?

"I am one of your many students and I really appreciate the knowledge that you are opening for us."

No universal answer

You have asked a question for which there is no universal agreement. Some people claim it does not matter what you eat as long as you are consistent in your practice.

However, many spiritual teachers and mystics all over the world believe that there is a direct connection between spirituality, psychic powers and the food we eat. This is what I believe, too.

Why are vegetarianism and abstaining from eating meat conducive to spiritual growth and psychic ability?

First, our physical structure and psychological processes are not meant for meat. Meat-eating animals have sharp fangs to tear meat. They salivate heavily to predigest the meat before it even reaches the stomach. They have short colons so the meat they eat gets out of their body or is excreted at once.

Meat easily rots and must be eliminated quickly, otherwise it becomes toxic.

Vegetable- and fruit-eating animals do not have fangs. They do not salivate heavily when eating and they have long colons. Fruits and vegetables do not rot or become toxic as fast as animal meat.

One thing more, when an animal is butchered or killed, it releases toxins that get absorbed by humans when they eat the meat. Even if modern slaughtering process is followed to make the killing of animals painless, they are still aware they will be killed and they release toxins.

We are what we eat. If we eat animal meat, don't we literally and in reality make that animal part of us?

Almost all religions of the world advocate a more vegetarian diet. Although the Christian religion allows the eating of lamb and, I think, chicken, it does ask us to avoid certain animal meats they consider to be unclean.

The Muslims do not eat pork. The Hindus and Buddhists completely avoid eating animal meat.

You will note that societies that avoid eating meat are also highly spiritual, while those that are meat eaters are the most materialistic in the world. I do not have to name the countries whose populations are mainly meat eaters and those that are vegetarians.

Among all the established religions in the world, the Buddhists are the most peace-loving and they are vegetarians. Actually, no religion is essentially violent. But followers are sometimes driven to excesses.

Even Christianity, whose founder, Jesus, was peace-loving, has had a long history of violence and cruelty.

A vegetarian diet is conducive not only to a peaceful and quiet mind, but also to spiritual growth and understanding.

Cards for reading

Here's a question on the use of cards for psychic reading from Edward who attended my seminar on ESP in Clark Field, Pampanga, last year.

"Lately, I tried using playing cards for psychic reading and the [subjects of the reading] were amazed. They said everything I told them was true. I just want to ask if there is anything wrong or negative in using cards for reading."

I don't see anything wrong or negative in using cards for psychic reading. These are merely tools to access information from our subconscious minds and they have no power on their own. Some use crystal balls, tea leaves, chicken egg and other materials for psychic readings.

As long as your intentions are good and noble, I see nothing wrong in using cards for psychic readings.

Pleasures of tea

THE ANCIENT art of calligraphy uses fluid hand movements that require total focus.

A TEA-LEAF reading can lead to wonderful discoveries.

ENRICHED WITH VITAMIN C, Earth & Sky Green Iced Tea is a refreshing alternative to all the sodas and carbonated drinks available everywhere. It offers the same soothing and calming benefits of real tea.

Made with natural ingredients, and containing 100 percent of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) of Vitamin C, Earth & Sky Lemon Iced Tea and Earth & Sky Green Iced Tea are brewed from the finest tea leaves and infused with all-natural lemon flavor.

The taste is just what tea should taste—not too sweet, too sour or too bitter but just right.

Earth & Sky Lemon Iced Tea and Earth & Sky Green Iced Tea come in 45-g and 500-g packs and are available in leading supermarkets, groceries, convenience stores and restaurants. For the calorie-conscious, there's also the Earth & Sky Lemon Iced Tea low-calorie version so you can have the great taste without the extra weight.

TAI CHI requires a focused mind and hand-and-body coordination.

Free glucose meters

GLUCERNA SR IS GIVING away up to 100 glucose meters to help diabetics monitor their blood sugar levels.

Under its special promotion Love Gift: Take Control, Take Glucerna SR, customers will get a free Optium glucose meter with every purchase of 12 900-g cans of Glucerna SR in single or accumulated purchases until March 31.

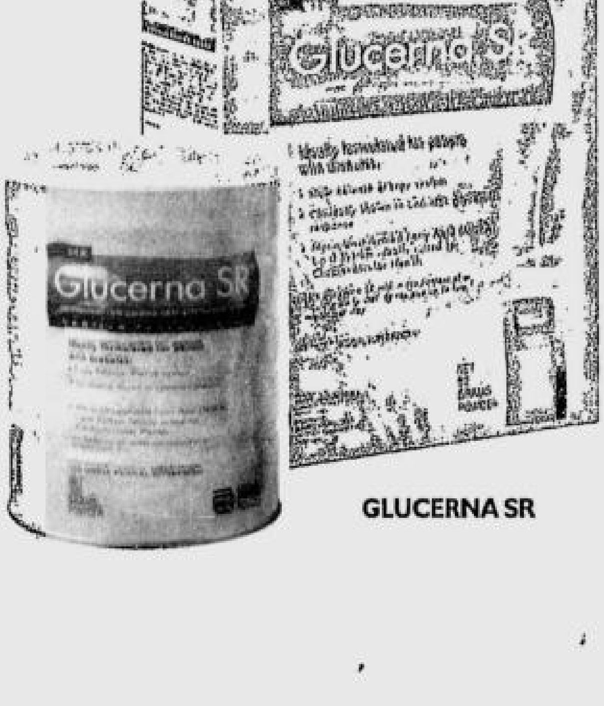
Herziel D. Ferrer, Glucerna SR product manager, said that aside from the free glucose meter, loyal customers will also get one box of glucose strips on their 12th purchase of Glucerna SR 900-g cans. Patients can save as much as P6,000 with the free offers.

Glucerna SR has a unique Spaced Released (SR) energy system that allows the body to absorb sugar slowly to minimize after-meal sugar level surges. It provides sustained release of energy throughout the day.

Glucerna SR also contains high levels of monounsaturated fatty acids (Mufa) to help lower blood cholesterol and promote a healthier heart. Its nutrient-dense and low-calorie formula is designed for better weight management. The formula comes in vanilla and chocolate flavors.

Glucerna SR free glucose meter promo is available in all Manson Drug outlets and Home Delivery nationwide through Med Express Drugstore at 6343333 and AB Sandoval at 9102001.

Call 6890444 or the toll-free hotline 1-800-108433427. Trained health professionals answer calls 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday.



GLUCERNA SR

Heart center holds review course

THE PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER (PHC) will hold a first-of-its-kind medical symposium as part of its 2007 Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) Review Course Feb. 23-24.

With the theme "Emerging Concepts, Shifting Practices," medical symposium head Dr. Gilbert C. Vilela said the review course would aim to identify what worked best in patients by reviewing treatment options and clinical results.

Vilela said many physicians had not been updated on the management of cardiovascular (like hypertension or high blood pressure) and metabolic (like diabetes) diseases.

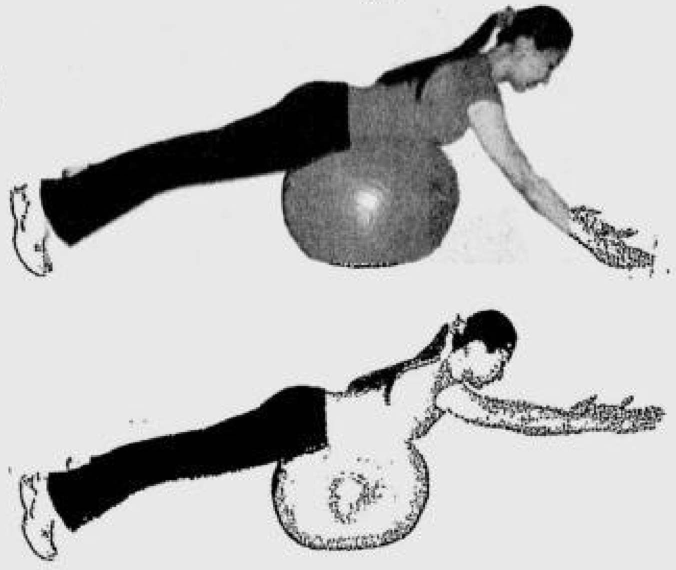
Through the symposium, PHC will focus on reviewing old versus new standards in managing CAD, with emphasis on what really works.

Coronary artery disease occurs when the arteries supplying blood to the heart muscle (coronary arteries) harden and become narrow, reducing or obstructing blood and oxygen flow to the heart. This results in angina, heart attack, heart failure, or arrhythmias (irregular heart rhythm). CAD is the most common type of heart disease and is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the United States. Call 0917-5490050.

CLIP & SAVE

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Prone overhead lift



THIS EXERCISE strengthens the muscles in the back of your shoulders, as well as your middle and lower back. Strong muscles in these areas improve your posture and can help relieve aches and pains associated with sitting at a desk for long periods.

Equipment:

Stability ball or gym bench

Dumbbells are optional.

Exercise technique:

1. Lie face down on a stability ball with your legs apart. Your head and shoulders will be off the edge and your arms hanging down.
2. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and raise your arms with the palms together to shoulder level.
3. Hold the position for one or two seconds.
4. Slowly lower the arms.

Performance tips:

1. Since these muscles tend to be weak in most people, don't use dumbbells until you are stronger.
2. Make sure your head stays in line with your spine. Avoid bending your head down or looking up.
3. If you need help with balance, stabilize by putting your feet against a wall.
4. Exhale when you lift the arms; inhale when you bring them down.

Repetitions:

12-15 repetitions

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

Wellness is a state of mind

ATTITUDES LIKE "I'M TOO OLD to exercise," "Why should I exercise when I don't need to lose weight" or "I'll just take a diet pill" are mental obstacles to keeping fit and maintaining a healthy weight.

Here are the attitudes I wish people have about fitness so they can improve the quality of their lives.

Vital

Looking the best you can is a pleasant side effect but it isn't the most important reason you should exercise. Exercise is a vital part of being healthy. You cannot do without it if you want your body to be in tip-top shape.

Long ago, there was no need to make a conscious effort to exercise because strenuous physical activity was part of daily life. Today, we live under abnormal conditions.

Our bodies are made for hard physical labor and, in fact, thrive on vigorous activity, and yet our lifestyles don't demand anything more taxing than moving a computer mouse or sending a text message.

As a result, our bodies deteriorate prematurely as we grow older and we fall prey to lifestyle ailments like heart disease, diabetes and hypertension.

Movement

Someone once said, "Exercise is optional but movement is essential." Exercise doesn't have to mean going to the gym. It can also mean dancing, doing martial arts or sports, housecleaning and gardening.

Keeping physically active is what is important. Walk whenever you can. Use the stairs instead of the elevator. Purposely be "inefficient" by taking the longer route to your mall destination.

Enjoy

Choosing a workout you enjoy is powerful motivation to exercise for the rest of your life. But you should also have the right attitude. The people who are the most consistent exercisers are those who think of their workouts as a pleasurable reward for their bodies. Even if you enjoy your workout, if you believe exercise is punishment for eating too much or being overweight, you will not be truly committed.

Young and old

Exercise isn't just for the young. In fact, the older one gets, the more important it is to exercise. Just as a brand-new car doesn't need much maintenance, the ill effects of not enough physical activity are not obvious when you are in your teens and 20s.

The older you are, just like an old car, the more you need regular tune-ups. Unfortunately, unlike a car, there are no spare parts for your body that you can easily buy at your local car shop. All the more reason to exercise to keep your body in good running order.

For every 'body'

Everybody needs to be physically active. That includes people who are naturally thin. Research shows that slim, unfit people are more likely to die of all causes than overweight but fit people.

Exercise is not just for healthy or able-bodied people. Even if I lost both my legs tomorrow in a car accident, I would not stop working out because there are exercises to keep what would remain of my body in excellent shape.

Being physically handicapped doesn't mean that exercise is not relevant. Under those conditions, it becomes an even greater priority.

The same goes for people with special health conditions like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, etc. You are not expected to do the same exercises as athletes or people without your problem. But there are definitely exercises that are appropriate and beneficial.

Discipline

I once saw an ad for a fitness center that said: "The dictionary is the only book where success comes before work." I would be a liar if I told you that there was such a thing as instant fitness or instant fat loss.

The truth is that discipline, self-control and consistency are the keys to success. This is true not only for fitness but also for everything else in life.

You can win the lotto tomorrow and have instant wealth but there is no guarantee you will be able to keep it unless you have the discipline and self-control to invest it wisely.

The truth is painful but if you accept it, it will set you free to be fit and slim (not a size "small" but whatever is healthy for your height and build) for the rest of your life.

Body appreciation

I feel so sad when I hear people say negative things about their bodies. It used to be mostly women who would say these terrible things but now I hear more men indulge in negative "body talk," too. Not content with that, people also say negative things about other people's bodies.

Words are powerful. How can you encourage yourself to stick to your exercise program if you are constantly criticizing your body shape, size or fitness level?

Love and appreciate your body by saying kind things to it. Focus on the positive changes your body goes through when you exercise. Do not deny the negative aspects of your body but do not get obsessed about them either. Your body is a gift from God. Treat it with the respect it deserves.

The Art of Living will have a workshop on Breathing to Relieve Stress and Anxiety March 5-10 at Edsa Shangri-La Hotel. Text 2920 (Globe & Smart only): AOL > Name > Message

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

Tips for staying happy in 2007

"LIVE A HAPPY LIFE" IN 2007 IS the message of the first issue of Healthy Options Newsdigest (January/February 2007).

Starting with the cover story "The Good Life," the publication suggests six prerequisites to happiness, a primary goal of people.

Healthy Options Newsdigest stresses that happiness depends on both external and internal. It suggests "Happiness Enhancers" and answers "Frequently Asked Questions."

For the New Year, check out the "10 slim-down strategies you can count on." Dr. William Dietz of the Centers for Disease Control says, "If you can count it, you can change it."

The special report on "Do you have anger illness?" gives readers tips on self-control. In "Anger Illness: A Crisis Erupting," it is suggested that the first step toward overcoming the problem is recognizing it and knowing that something must be done about it.

The anti-aging section reminds readers to "Engage Your Brain." From lifelong learning to positive thinking to eating nutritious foods, scientists are learning more about how to keep the brain sharp.

Women's health is tackled in "Menopause—The Rite of Passage." Discussed are the onset of menopause and its physical and emotional symptoms.

Other stories are the "Powerful Benefits of Soy," "Glucosamine & Chondroitin Sulfate: Natural Remedy for Arthritis," "Calculating the Fertile Period," "Born to Lead, Listen or Laugh?"

The Healthy Options Newsdigest is free to customers of Healthy Options at 1/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati; 2/L, Festival Supermall, Filinvest, Alabang; G/L, Ayala Center, Cebu City; LG/F, SM City, North Edsa; 2/L, SM City Manila; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati; 2/L, SM Megamall B, Edsa, Mandaluyong; SM Pampanga; SM Sta. Rosa; SM Mall of Asia and SM Clark; website www.healthyoptions.com.ph.

HEALTHY Options Newsdigest welcomes 2007 with tips on "Living a Happy Life," "10 Slim-down Strategies" and more. The cover story of the latest issue of Healthy Options Lifestyle Newsdigest is "The Good Life."

Love your heart

BE KIND TO YOUR HEART this month and every month of the year.

Have a healthy heart diet by drinking milk every day like Nesvita Pro-Heart, a specially formulated adult milk drink to help keep the heart healthier and protected against cardiovascular diseases.

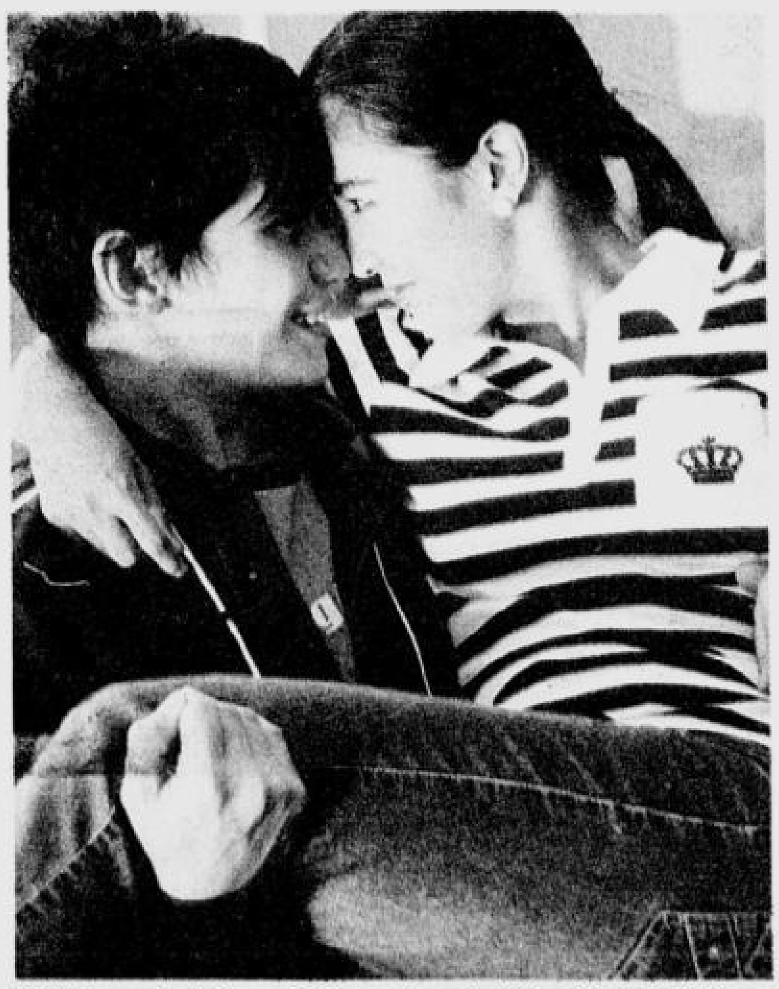
Nesvita has Acticol, a natural plant sterol extracted from soya beans that has been found in clinical tests to help lower bad cholesterol, thus reducing the risk of getting heart problems.

A nutritious diet can help keep the arteries clear and decrease the risk of developing heart-related illnesses. In addition to milk, eat more fruits, vegetables and carbohydrate-rich foods like rice, pasta, breads, and grains. Choose lean cuts of meat and eat fish and skinless chicken instead of beef.

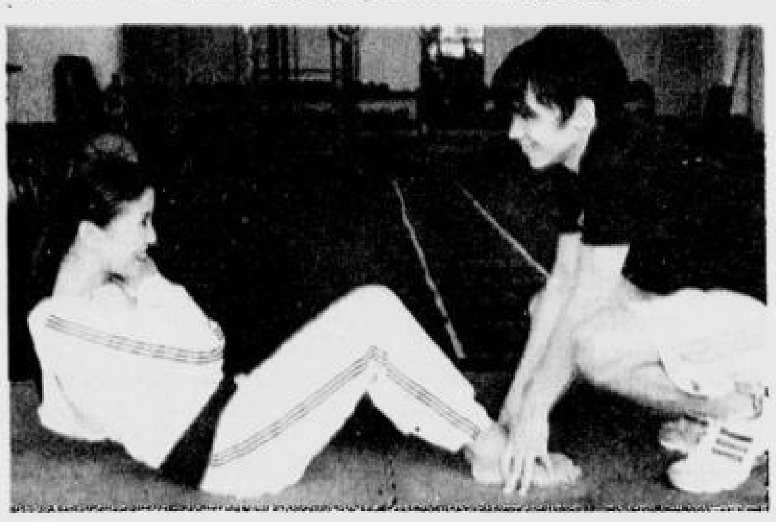
Drink low-calorie beverages and minimize intake of sweets. Avoid fast foods like burgers and other fried foods.

Nesvita is a range of wellness products specifically designed to meet the Filipino adult's health needs. Also available are Nesvita Cereal Milk Drink, Nesvita Pro-Digestion, Nesvita Pro-Bone Protection, and Nesvita Pro-Weight Management.

Nesvita Pro-Heart is available in leading supermarkets and groceries nationwide.



YAEL Yuzon, lead singer of Spongecola, and girlfriend Lia Cruz believe involvement in sports as a couple promotes healthy competition.



In fitness and in health

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO bond as a couple is by keeping fit together.

Love for sports has brought together couples like Ateneo Blue Eagle JC Intal, an Interdisciplinary Studies senior, and Karla Abellana, a Psychology major. The two share a common passion for swimming, running and walking, not to mention basketball.

"Sports promotes healthy competition. Plus you realize that you have a great support system in your partner," says Intal.

"For gear, I like the clothes to have style and comfort," says Abellana.

"I most especially like the adi 1 technology because they make for the best playing shoes ever!" says JC.

UAAP and PBL courtside reporter as well as 103.5 DJ Lia Cruz reveals boyfriend Yael Yuzon's secret dream is to be a basketball player.

"But he was too short!" she teases Yuzon.

"That's why I vicariously live through Lia's basketball experience as a courtside reporter," says the Spongecola lead singer.

Yuzon and Cruz, who both think running is a great sport, are also looking forward to doing some hiking and water sports.

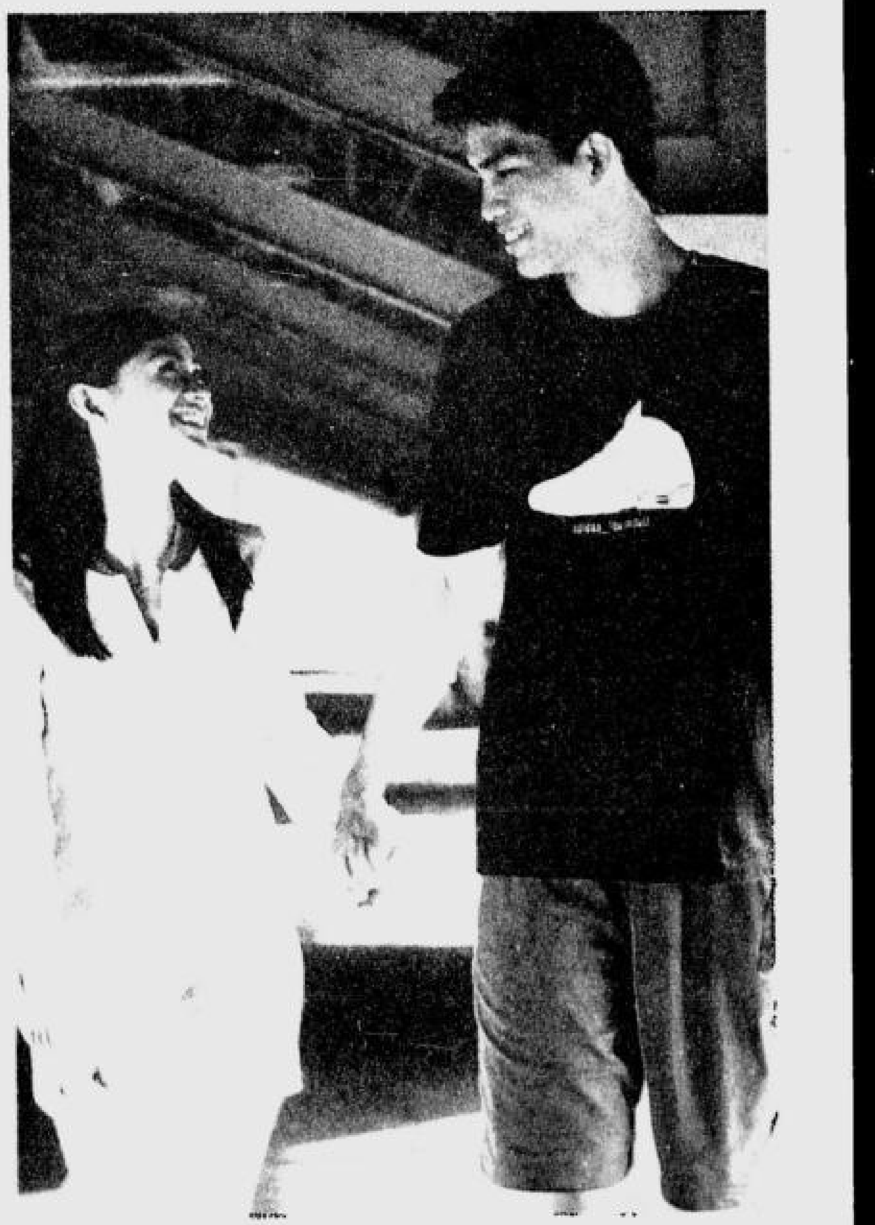
Dressed in the Adidas three stripes, Cruz says, "Well, it's important to be chic while playing. Of course, match that with high-tech quality."

"The three stripes make people look taller," quips Yuzon. "I also like the cushioning and the stability that the shoes provide. It's much easier to jump around on and off stage with them on."

The Adidas Sport Performance clothing puts emphasis on technological innovation and caters to a wide range of sports including basketball, football, cross-training, football, running, soccer and tennis.

The Adidas Originals clothing line, on the other hand, represents the vision and passion of Adidas founder Adi Dassler. Attention to the small details makes the line functional and fashionable.

As they say, in love and in sports, there is always a perfect fit.



APART from basketball, JC Intal and Karla Abellana share a passion for swimming as well as running and walking.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

Is it true that red wine is good for the heart? Must it always be red wine? White wine? other alcohol?

There are claims that drinking alcohol in moderation can give a person cardiovascular health benefits. One example of which is red wine. There are studies that link moderate consumption of red wine to lower rates of heart disease deaths, but how it benefits the heart remains unanswered. Flavonoids and other anti-oxidants, which can be found in grapes, can increase the expression and activity of a vasoprotective enzyme, which can decrease the risk of heart disease by decreasing or even preventing the development of atherosclerosis. Nitric oxide protects against vascular injury, inhibits the adhesion of inflammatory cells to the vessel wall, and limits the activation of platelets. This may be the most plausible explanation of the effect of wine in people. Research has suggested the bulk of grapes' heart-healthy benefits come from antioxidant compounds primarily found in their skins. Although these skins are quickly separated out during the making of most white wines, recent studies have shown that white wine is as equally as effective as red wine since the pulp of grapes appears to be just as heart-healthy as the skin, thanks to other types of antioxidants present in the pulp. However, no matter how promising these claims are, according to the American Heart Association, there are no direct comparison trials that have been done to determine the specific effect of wine or alcohol on the risk of developing heart disease or stroke. Despite considerable data from studies and strong suggestions from experimental research, the evidence is still insufficient to encourage patients who do not drink to start consuming red wine as part of a strategy to protect against heart disease, considering that several other well-proven therapies exist for cardiovascular risk reduction that do not have wine's undesirable effects. For those patients who are established moderate drinkers, abstention should not be enforced. Increasing alcohol consumption for the purposes of cardio protection, however, is not justified.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by Dr. Joyce Jumangit. Dr. Joyce specializes in IM-Adult Cardiology and Echocardiography. She obtained her medicine degree and took her residency training for Internal Medicine at FEU-NRMF and later completed her subspecialization at Philippine Heart Center. MEDICard members may seek her for consultations at Centrille Medical Diagnostics & Polyclinic, FEU-NRMF Medical Center and at the Philippine Heart Center.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

[illegible]

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

The love-yourself Valentine checklist

"Every emotion is a message from your soul."—Gary Zukav

CONSIDER YOURSELF TODAY. GO through your day to day life. Take an inventory of your actions and habits. Ask these questions for all that you do.

Do I do this for myself to feel better? To survive, to feel safer, to feel more secure about myself?

For every yes, ask yourself: "Could I be motivated to do something for a higher purpose?" Authentic purpose means authentic power, which is human experience minus the limitation of fear.

Intention

Beginning today, clarify your intentions. Focus on your internal landscape. Know that your external world is a reflection of your internal world. Therefore, what you intend, you will attract. What you speak, will happen. Whatever you imagine will become.

Power affirmations:

"I am all that I can be."

"I am one with my heart."

Creation

Convert your intention to creation. Remake, redo, reinvent yourself. It's never too late. This means:

- Take charge of your body and mind. Do not blame your doctor, husband/wife, boss, lover for your state of health and heart. Accept responsibility. Take over now.

Affirmation: "I am in charge of myself."

To do:

Health—Analyze your diet. If it is unhealthy, start adopting healthier choices/practices.

Exercise—Manage your stress by taking challenging situations calmly.

Wealth—If you have a deficit or are found wanting, seek more prosperous paths. It's never too late to switch jobs, start a business based on your true desires. Be unafraid to try something new. Be bold. Be brave. Do a job that is closer to who you are.

Affirm: "Wealth and success are mine now."

Love—Whatever relationship you are in, is as it should be at this time in your life. Whatever love that comes should strengthen you with the knowledge that you are loved. Accept the love with grace and thanksgiving and without passing judgment. Love is a gift, no matter how you look at it.

But above all, love yourself enough to give yourself the best. Start practicing kindness to yourself by being less critical/demeaning/angry with yourself.

Affirm: "I love myself."

Celebration

Celebrate life. Each day is a gift. And every day is an opportunity to say "thank you." Practice giving thanks because the universe blesses a grateful heart.

The more you say thanks, the more the blessings come.

Affirm: "I celebrate life today."

Loving practices to do:

- Take a long deserved break from the abuses you have done to your body. Cleanse and detoxify. Include coconut water and vegetable juices in your daily regimen.
- Pamper yourself. Treat yourself to something you feel is long deserved.
- Feed yourself positive thoughts and feelings. When a negative thought enters your mind, stop yourself. Remember the good times, not the bad. Revive the positive feelings, not the negative.

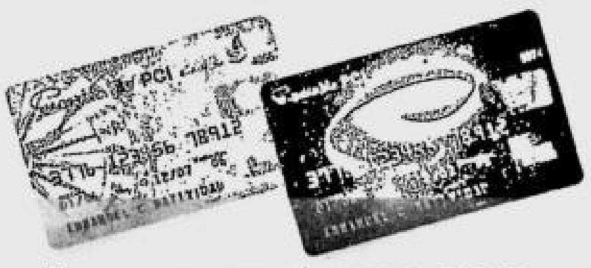
'The Guest House'

This being human is a guest house,
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture.
Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

—Rumi

Love and light!

Reference: "Heart of the Soul" by Gary Zukav



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Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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Lino speaks up on relationship with KC

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

WHEN WE PRINTED THE SNAPSHOT OF **KC Concepcion** and **Lino Cayetano** (taken in DBay Hong Kong) in this space, I meant no malice. Mega's *hija bonita* and Direk are both so wholesome. Their families should not worry that a simple picture will make people jump to crazy conclusions about what they were doing in the Crown Colony together.

Just like many dating couples, they were just having good, clean fun. Mommy Mega has said her piece on TV. She cannot overemphasize the fact that KC and Lino did not spend a week in Hong Kong. Regardless how many weeks, days, hours or minutes they were together, the point is they made time for each other. So much love, so little time? It's immeasurable when your heart is in it.

Lino finally speaks up now. His text message: "I just want to clear up some things regarding your article. KC and her entire family went to Hong Kong before she flew to Paris. On their last day there, I surprised her and spent half a day with KC and her friends from HK Disneyland. Then she left for Paris *na*.

"We didn't spend a week there and we didn't do anything behind her family's back. We are genuinely still in the process of getting to know each other as well as getting to know each other's family and friends. I think that the most important aspect of starting a relationship is building the proper foundation.

"I am not in the habit of reacting to the press

LINO/D2

LINO CAYETANO

MARK BURNETT

Reality, the movie

Mark Burnett, creator of 'Survivor' and the upcoming 'On the Lot,' says, 'Good TV is good TV'–and that's just that

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

MARK BURNETT, EMMY-WINNING CREator of Reality shows like "Survivor," "Rock Star: INXS/SuperNova" and "The Contender," is eyeing the movies.

Is a new genre in the works—reality movie?

Burnett is teaming up with Oscar-winning filmmaker Steven Spielberg in creating and working as executive producer for "On the Lot"—a reality competition in which 16 aspiring directors vie for a $1-million development deal at DreamWorks.

This is Burnett's second collaboration with DreamWorks—the first was the reality boxing competition "The Contender."

A lot of buzz surrounds the new Burnett-DreamWorks project—especially since the Spielberg name is attached to it.

Burnett relates: "When we started working on this show, Steven told me: 'I've spent my whole career finding fantastic young talent ... The talent is out there. And we are giving them an opportunity [on this show].'"

As expected, the show's website has been swamped with applicants.

"Over a two-day period, we received 1,000 entries," Burnett recounts.

Now, Burnett is wooing Asian filmmakers to send in their works via the Net. "Deadline for application is Feb. 16. They can upload their films on our Web site onthelot.com," says Burnett.

The TV hotshot is gung-ho about exploring new media—his latest project, "Gold Rush," is in partnership with AOL.

After television and the Internet, he is indeed setting his sights on the movie industry.

One thing he won't touch is a reality show based on his own life.

"That would be a horrifying ... foolish thought," Burnett gasps.

What kind of filmmaker do you wish to discover on the show? Reality shows tend to favor flashy personalities because self-effacing people generally don't make good TV.

Finding talent is the priority. And, on this show, we have an opportunity to find *great* talent. Although only one person wins and gets to work with Steven Spielberg, the other finalists can also get discovered. In fact, part of the arrangement is that we have the option to work with any of them.

I believe that the meek will inherit the earth. Even if they are soft-spoken for as long as they are talented, they'll be highly regarded.

On "Survivor" you kinda need to be over-the-top sometimes. But if you're a filmmaker, at least 50 percent of what you're saying is in the script.

How will Hollywood celebrities participate, as actors in the entries, or as judges, or as both?

I think we'll see some participation, both as judges and as weekly guests. Major studios will see this as a great way to promote their movies.

What makes it different from Matt Damon and Ben Affleck's "Project Greenlight"?

It's very different. "Project Greenlight" followed a single director through the process of

REALITY/D5

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Lino speaks up . . .

From page D1

but through your widely read column, I am praying that some of these issues may be clarified as it is very important to me that the people I care about know that I care about the truth."

Oh, well. It doesn't really matter how little or how much time lovers (or would-be lovers) spend together. *Apres tout*, time stands still when you're with your beloved. Suddenly, all you hear is your heart beating and not the clock ticking. Love may or may not last so we should just cherish Cupid's gift of time.

Lessons in love

In honor of red hot (or red alert?!) V-day, here are some stars' lessons in love:

CESAR MONTANO: Always give your partner grater love than he or she gives you. Love begins at home.

PIOLO PASCUAL: Love has taught me to be selfless. There was a time I had to let go of someone I really loved but it was for our own good.

PAULEEN LUNA: Love can make or break you. It's a matter of taking risks so choose the person who's worth fighting for. God always gives happy endings. If it's not happy then it's not yet the end.

MARIEL RODRIGUEZ: Don't forget your friends. Sure, you want to spend time with your BF; but make sure you still have time for your friends because BFs come and go but friends are forever!

JOHN ESTRADA: When this girl I loved left because she thought it was the right thing to do and it would make her happy, I allowed it even if I didn't want to. Love makes you put the happiness of your loved one first.

RACHEL ANN GO: Never take the one who loves you for granted. Love him more than he deserves.

JOLINA MAGDANGAL: My long-distance relationship with Bebong for years taught me that love understands and therefore waits.

ALFRED VARGAS: Love transcends everything. It is the purpose of living. Love can hurt but sometimes it's a good hurt. And whether love gives joy or brings tears, it

LINO/D3

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4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
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3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 APOCALYPTO
5 THE HOLIDAY
6 THE MESSENGERS
7 HANNIBAL RISING
8 CHARLOTTE'S WEB/BLOOD DIAMOND
9 BLOOD CHOCOLATE/ERAGON
10 AGENT X 44

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Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Nino, Marikina City tel. 9341927
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3 (DOLBY) NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
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Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
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2 APOCALYPTO
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4 CODENAME CLEANER
5 HANNIBAL RISING

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2 ABNORMAL BEAUTY
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4 RESERVED

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4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

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3 THE RETURN
4 KALABIT
5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

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2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
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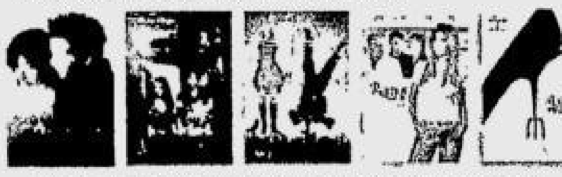

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3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
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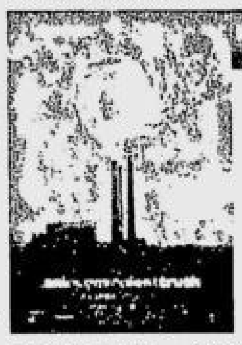

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1 TENACIOUS D
2 AGENT X44
3 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 AGENT X44
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
4 ZU WARRIORS

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 THE MESSENGER
3 BABEL
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 THE MESSENGER
2 THE CLEANER
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66
1 LOVE FEST 2007
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE MESSENGER
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 BABEL
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 ERAGON
6 LOVE FEST 2007
7 AGENT X44
8 THE MESSENGER

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 RESERVED
3 LOVE FEST 2007
4 AGENT X44
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 BLOOD DIAMOND
7 RESERVED
8 SPIRIT TRAP

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX
3 AGENT X44
4 THE MESSENGER
5 LOVE FEST 2007
6 BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 LOVE FEST 2007
3 ZU WARRIORS
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHOWTIME
EVENT CALENDAR

MAXMEDIA presents
On Valentine's Day, fall in love all over again as MYMP sings their all-time favorite hits from their newest album on the most romantic day of the year...
MYMP In Love
THE VALENTINE CONCERT
February 14, 2007 • 8:30pm
THE CENTERSTAGE SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 9
Tickets at P500 • P800
(exclusive of 5% ticketron charge)
RESERVED SEATS ON ALL SECTIONS
TICKETWORLD 891-5610/891-9999
with special guest Top Suzara

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedule just text **eastwood** and send to **2948** for Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers
For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 HANNIBAL RISING
2:45, 5:40, 8:25, 11:05
R-18

2 THE HOLIDAY
2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10
PG-13

3 APOCALYPTO
2:20, 5:20
R-18
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
8:30, 11:00
G

4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
12:55, 3:20, 5:55, 8:30, 11:00
PG-13

SHANG CINEPLEX
① THE HOLIDAY
MTRCB PG-13
1.00, 4 00, 7:00, 10.00
② CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 45, 5 05 MTRCB GP
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
7.25, 10 00 MTRCB GP
③ CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
MTRCB R-13
2 15 4 50 7 25 10 00
④ HANNIBAL RISING
1 45, 4 30 MTRCB R-18
APOCALYPTO
7 00 10 00 MTRCB R-18
PREMIERE THEATRE
THE MESSENGER
MTRCB PG-13
12 30 2 45, 5 00, 7 15, 9 35

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special
A Blockbuster Gift for all Season
The Shang Cineplex Gift Certificates
Treat your family and friends to a thrilling movie experience only at the shang.
Cinema Treats- for Cinemas 1, 2, 3, and 4
Premiere Rewards- for the Premiere Theatre

6th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
EDSA corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City.
Call 633-7851, loc. 171/ 170 or 633-2227 for more details.
Shangri-La Plaza

POWER PLANT CINEMA
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Rockwell Center, Makati City
☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41

HANNIBAL RISING R18 2:50,5:20,7:50	THE HOLIDAY PG13 1:55,4:45,7:35,10:25	CHARLOTTE'S WEB G 12:20 APOCALYPTO R18 2:30
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30	CODE NAME: THE CLEANER PG13 2:00,4:00,6:00,8:00	THE MESSENGERS PG13 2:30,4:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41
MATINNEE 110.00 FREE SEATING SCREENING BEFORE 5:00P.M. – MONDAY-FRIDAY

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 THE MESSENGER
11:15 , 1:35 , 3:50
6:05 , 8:20 , 10:35
PG-13
CINEMA 2 THE HOLIDAY
12:10 , 3:10 , 6:10
9:10
PG-13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
11:15 , 2:00 , 4:40
7:20 , 10:00 R-13
CINEMA 4 HANNIBAL RISING
11:30 , 2:15 , 5:00
7:45 , 10:30 R-18
CINEMA 5 THE HOLIDAY
10:40 , 1:35 , 4:30
7:25 , 10:20
PG-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

Feb 13 & 14 , 2007	OGIE ALCASID AND AI - AI	8:00 PM
Feb 16 & 17 , 2007	Passion Y Fuego	8:00 PM
March 08 , 2007	EDNA LEDESMA " DANCING W/ THE CHAMPIONS "	8:00 PM

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
Feb. 06 & 20 , 2007	DYORDS KO PO	8:00 PM
February 11 , 2007	LOVI POE "A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION"	9:00 PM
Feb. 13 & 14 , 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

Lino speaks up on relationship . . .

From page D2

makes me feel that I'm alive.

When Erik met Rufa

CATCH real-life couple **Erik Santos** and **Rufa Mae Quinto** in "When Erik Met Rufa The Repeat … to the Max!" on Feb. 16, 9 p.m. at the Aliw Theater. Special guests are **Ogie Alcasid, Ai-Ai de las Alas** and the Hotlegs.

I teased RMQ: "When Erik Weds Rufa, coming soon? Will your plunging neckline be gone once you take the plunge?" Ms Bombshell laughs. "Slight! *Siyempre pag* Mrs *na ako dapat for* my husband's eyes only *ang aking mga* natural resources!"

So feast your eyes on Ruffa Mae while you still can. Call 911-5555.

Rome & Juliet

CINEMA One Originals presents the critically acclaimed digital film "Rome & Juliet" starting Feb. 14 at the IndieSine Theater of Robinsons Galleria. Starring **Mylene Dizon** and **Andrea del Rosario** and directed by **Connie Macatuno**, it follows the romantic journey of two straight women who plunge in forbidden love.

Andrea shares the most daring thing she has done for love: "I surprised my BF who was on a business trip halfway across the world. I called him up and told him I regret not being able to follow. Then 10 minutes later I showed up in his room wearing a sexy dress and had champagne delivered."

Ah! Love makes us all corny in unpredictable ways.

'Baliw'

AFTER graduating from New York University, Pinoy director **Redd Ochoa** received special acceptances at the Angels City and LA Film Festivals for his work "Mary." He has also worked with Academy Award winning director Vladimir Menshov on "Shirli Myrli."

Now, his first indie feature "Baliw" is scheduled to premiere this month here and abroad. Produced by Redd5Luke Entertainment, it stars **Ryan Eigenmann, Joel Torre, Jaime Fabregas** and an array of promising newcomers.

New image model

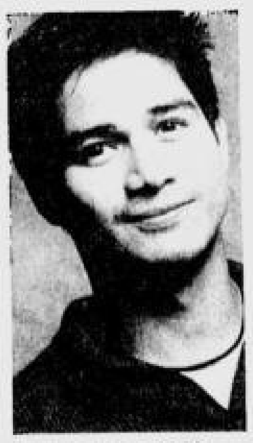
THE FRESHEST face on TV and the big screen, model-turned-actress **Isabel Oli**, is Cinderella's latest image model for 2007. Like the Cinderella fairytale, the shoe perfectly fit with Isabel. Her look can be transformed from contemporary to glamorous. Watch out for their sizzling summer campaign directed by **Dona Cuna Pita.**

PERSONAL: Happy V-day, H! Thanks for giving my heart a total makeover and taking it to a better place.

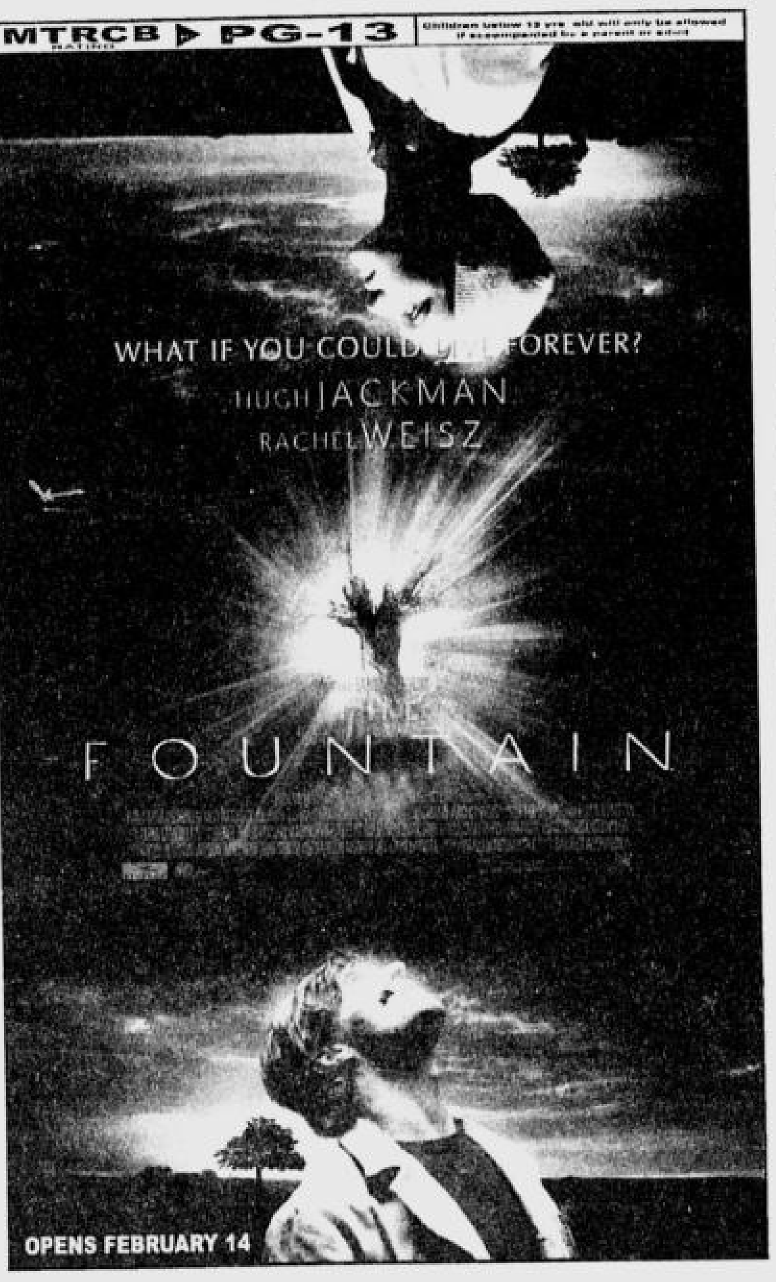
E-Mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

CESAR MONTANO

PAULEEN LUNA



PIOLO PASCUAL



MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
WHAT IF YOU COULD LIVE FOREVER?
HUGH JACKMAN
RACHEL WEISZ
THE FOUNTAIN
OPENS FEBRUARY 14

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
NOW SHOWING
Cameron Diaz · Kate Winslet · Jude Law · Jack Black
the Holiday
a film by Nancy Meyers
UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENT A WAVERLY FILMS PRODUCTION "THE HOLIDAY" ELI WALLACH EDWARD BURNS RUFUS SEWELL
HANS ZIMMER MARLENE STEWART JOE HUTSHING A.C.E. JON HUTMAN DEAN CUNDEY ASC SUZANNE FARWELL
BRUCE A. BLOCK NANCY MEYERS
sony.com/TheHoliday
Release through Solar Entertainment Corporation

ARANETA CENTER
Gateway Ali MALL Farmers Plaza
THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY
Gateway CINEPLEX*10
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

THE HOLIDAY 1:20 / 4:10 / 7:00 / 9:50	HANNIBAL RISING 1:15 / 4:00 / 6:45 / 9:30	THE MESSENGERS 1:40 / 3:40 / 5:40 / 7:40 / 9:40	PLATINUM CINEMA
CURSE OF THE GOLDER FLOWER 2:05 / 4:35 / 7:05 / 9:35	HOLLYWOODLAND 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30 CHARLOTTES WEB 12:30 / 2:30	CODENAME: THE CLEANER 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00	
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50	APOCALYPTO 12:40 / 3:40 / 6:40 / 9:40	BABEL 12:40 / 3:40 / 6:40 / 9:40	THE HOLIDAY 1:25 / 3:55 / 6:25 / 8:55

Ali MALL 5

HANNIBAL RISING 12:35 / 3:20 / 6:05 / 8:50	THE MESSENGERS 12:40 / 2:40 / 4:40 / 6:40 / 8:40	APOCALYPTO 12:10 R4 / 2:10 / 5:10 / 8:10
AGENT X-44 12:20 / 2:20 / 4:20 / 6:20 / 8:20	CURSE OF THE GOLDER FLOWER 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

CLIFF RICHARDS - " HERE AND NOW TOUR"
February 13. Tuesday, 8 pm

PAUL WILLIAMS /DENNIS LAMBERT CONCERT
February 14. Wednesday , 8 pm

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls Love malls!

AT THE CINEMAS
THX
Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice For verification please call 729 7777

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 THE CLEANER	2 THE HOLIDAY	3 HANNIBAL RISING	4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 NIGHT AT HE MUSEUM	2 THE MESSENGERS	3 THX HANNIBAL RISING GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE HISTORY BOYS	5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	6 THE HOLIDAY	7 APOCALYPTO
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 APOCALYPTO	2 THE HOLIDAY		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE MESSENGERS GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE HOLIDAY GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 THE HISTORY BOYS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HANNIBAL RISING GUARANTEED SEATS	5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE HOLIDAY GUARANTEED SEATS	2 HANNIBAL RISING		
	3 THE MESSENGERS	4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE HOLIDAY	2 THE MESSENGERS	3 APOCALYPTO	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE HOLIDAY	2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER		
	3 THE CLEANER	4 HANNIBAL RISING	5 THE MESSENGERS	

At the Activity Center
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
THE PROMISE movie promo tour feat. Richard Gutierrez, Angel Locsin & other guest stars February 14, 2007	Auto Focus '07 People's Choice Awards February 17, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Chinese New Year Dragon Dance w/ Porky Pig February 13, 2007	The Philippine International Jazz & Arts Festival February 20, 2007

GREENBELT — Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peak presents: Collection of Ana Rocha
February 7 to 18, 2007

Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents SONG & DANCE
at REP's Globe Theater - February 9 to March 4, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM — CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland (six shows)
February 15 to March 27, 2007
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

Ayala Malls CINEMAS
Stargazing at the Glorietta Activity Center
Meet & Greet
The stars of
You Got Me!
Toni Gonzaga and Sam Milby introducing Zanjoe Marudo
February 16, 2007
Friday, 5:30 PM
Glorietta Activity Center
Reserved seats at the Glorietta Activity Center for the first 200 moviegoers who will present any movie tickets purchased in any Ayala Malls Cinemas on February 16, 2007.
Plus! Exciting games, fabulous prizes & surprise treats await everyone!
STAR CINEMA ABS-CBN
glorietta

Ayala Malls Love malls!
Living and Loving it at MARKET! MARKET!
Feb. 11
With You...MYMP
Activity Center, 6pm
Bazaar! Bazaar!
Feb. 12-18
Valentine Bazaar! Bazaar!
Central Plaza
Feb. 10-18
Treats for Two Cinema Promo
For every 2 tickets purchased, get a chance to pick a prize
Feb. 20
The Philippine International Jazz and Arts Festival
Activity Center, 5pm to 9pm
MARKET! MARKET!

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

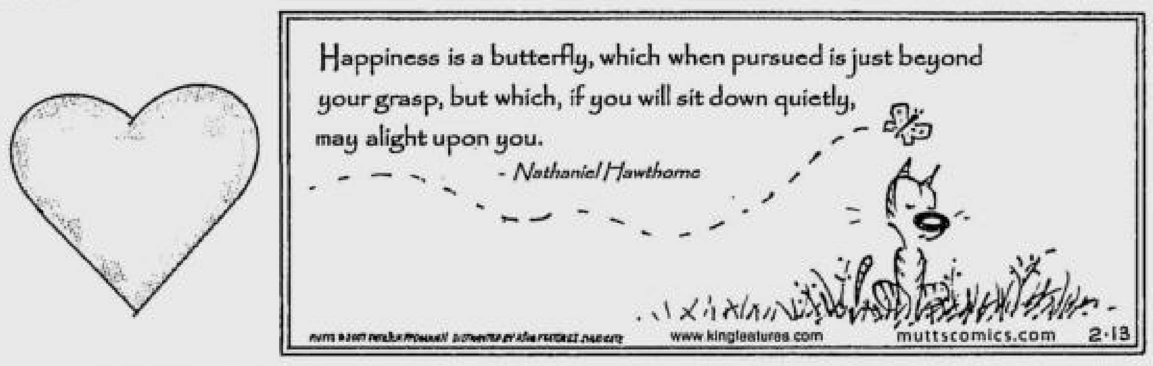
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

DAD! YOU FORGOT TO GET A SHOPPING CART!
I'M ONLY GOING TO BUY A COUPLE OF LIGHTBULBS. WHY DO WE NEED A SHOPPING CART?
OH.

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


Happiness is a butterfly, which when pursued is just beyond your grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
2·13

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

SOMEBODY'S GOT A LOVE LETTER! SOMEBODY THINKS YOU'RE CU-UUTE..!
YOU MUST BE THRILLED THAT SOMEWHERE, SOMEHOW, THERE'S A DEMENTED SOUL WHOSE CONCEPT OF PHYSICAL BEAUTY IS A LITTLE FREAKY
EH?
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

...HWOW TALAGA?! AT LAST NA BA ITOH?
TRULY?
NAHANAP MO NA ANG MR. RIGHT MO?
YAH!
ASTEEG! APIR! UM!
GRABE... AT LONG LAST... MY MR. RIGHT AYLABYU!
SARAP N'YAN SA EXAMS MAM'YA!
TSK! SWERTE MO NAMAN. SANA MAHANAP KO NA RIN "MR. RIGHT" KO SA KLASE... "MR. WRONG" KATABI KO NGAYON EH
OK CLASS... UM... BAGO TAYO MAG-EXAM NGAYON E PAGPAPALIT-PALITIN KO ULI PWESTO N'YO, OKS?...
HWAPAKK!
NAPAASA MO LANG AKOH KA!!
ASTEEG!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

ANG GALING NG TICKET KO!
HMM..
MAGALING GUMAWA NG BATAS?
MAGALING!
UMARTE!

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

SINU-SINO BA 'YUNG MGA IBOBOTO NATIN SA ELEKSYON?
SYEMPRE 'YUNG MGA MAY KARANASAN.
DI BA ANG PINIPILI NA MAGING BODYGUARD E 'YUNG MAY EXPERIENCE NANG PUMATAY NG TAO?
ANG PINIPILI NAMANG MANALO SA BIDDING NG KONTRATA E 'YUNG MAY EXPERIENCE NANG MAGBIGAY NG SUHOL.
KAYA HANGGA'T MAAARI E GUSTO KO NG POLITICIAN NA NAKARANAS NANG MAKULONG SA BILANGGUAN.
DAHIL MATATAKOT NA SILANG MANGURAKOT?
MANGUNGURAKOT PA RIN SILA... HINDI NGA LANG TAHASAN.

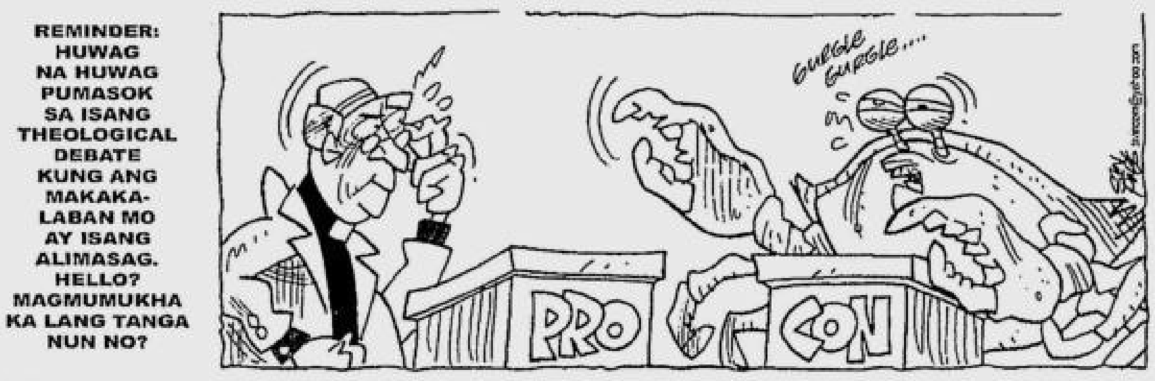
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

NAKAKATAKOT PALA ANG GLOBAL WARMING, JAJA!! PERO, MAS DAPAT MATAKOT ANG MGA BOYS NGAYON!!
BAKIT?
DAHIL MAY GLOBAL WARNING SA LAHAT NG KALALAKIHAN NGAYONG ARAW NA ITO!!!
GLOBAL WARNING NA ANO?!
'NA BUKAS, GLOBAL WAR PAG NALIMUTAN NILANG VALENTINE'S DAY!!!

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


REMINDER: HUWAG NA HUWAG PUMASOK SA ISANG THEOLOGICAL DEBATE KUNG ANG MAKAKALABAN MO AY ISANG ALIMASAG. HELLO? MAGMUMUKHA KA LANG TANGA NUN NO?
GURGLE GURGLE....
PRO
CON

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

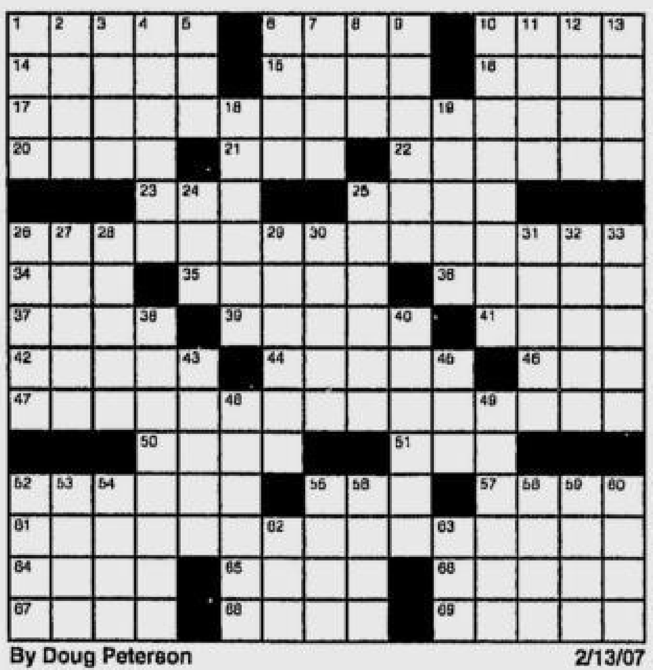
PANO KUNG MAGKARON AKONG MALUBHANG SAKIT PAGLAKI KO, DAHIL SA DAMI NG POLUSYON..
..TAPOS ISANG DOKTOR LANG ANG MAY KAYANG MAGPAGALING SA AKIN?
'WAG KANG MAG-ALALA, MAGIGING DOKTOR AKO..
..AT PAGAGALINGIN KITA!
WOW, DAHIL TUNAY KITANG KAIBIGAN?
HINDE. DAHIL AKO LANG ANG MAY LUNAS, PWEDE KITANG TAGAIN!
jmtejido 1-07

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

OH, THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING, BEN!
A CARD, FLOWERS AND CHOCOLATE! WOW!
UHH...THE BOX OF CHOCOLATES IS HALF EMPTY...
THE LINES AT THE FLORIST AND CARD SHOP WERE PARTICULARLY LONG...
SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Doug Peterson
Pasadena, CA

2/13/07

ACROSS

1 Tries to get a rise out of
6 Hired worker
10 Puts on the tube
14 Pond problem
15 God of love
16 Operatic showstopper
17 Shot
20 In this spot
21 __ Ridge, TN
22 Difficult trial
23 Dog tags, briefly
25 Norwegian saint
26 Shot
34 Flew the coop
35 Rainbow fish
36 Inquisitive one
37 IBM element
39 Technique
41 Hindu goddess
42 Gaucho's goodbye
44 Signs of sorrow
46 Work wk. starter
47 Shot
50 Zen paradox
51 Sundial numeral
52 Group of fish
55 Opening letters
57 Wall St. abbr.
61 Shot
64 Datebook entry: abbr.
65 Manhattan neighborhood
66 Hardy's nickname
67 Hive horde
68 Wilhelm of Cooperstown
69 Chicks' comments

DOWN

1 Cleansing ritual
2 Botanical balm
3 Inventor Sikorsky
4 Hoodwink
5 Aral or Caspian
6 Sarcastic laughter
7 Out of control
8 __ on your life!
9 Slobbers
10 Termite devourer
11 "Dies __"
12 Philbin's partner
13 Humorist Mort
18 Tough questions
19 Get a grip on
24 EPA-banned substance
25 Wanted man
26 Actor Dennehy
27 Han Solo's pal Calrissian
28 Up to
29 Decayed
30 Purchasing agent
31 Heat's home
32 Casaba or honeydew
33 Rubber gasket
38 Sentinels
40 Beethoven's Symphony #3
43 Mind another's business
45 Hindu title
48 Single shoe protector
49 Ignite
52 Sizable slice
53 Sleeveless garment
54 Oversell
55 Soot-covered
56 Rorschach image
58 Log for the holidays
59 Quick cut
60 Scratches (out)
62 Kanga's kid
63 Linoleum cleaner

Monday's Puzzle Solved

F	L	O	W	■	C	H	A	O	S	■	J	U	R	Y
R	I	C	H	■	R	A	L	L	Y	■	E	P	E	E
O	T	T	O	■	E	S	S	E	N	■	E	S	P	N
S	H	A	R	P	S	H	O	O	T	E	R	■	■	■
H	E	L	L	O	S	■	■	S	A	T	■	M	E	G
■	■	■	S	L	I	E	R	■	X	A	N	A	D	U
E	S	Q	■	A	D	L	I	B	■	■	O	L	G	A
N	A	T	U	R	A	L	D	I	S	A	S	T	E	R
E	V	I	L	■	■	Y	E	L	L	S	■	A	D	D
M	O	P	E	D	S	■	S	L	A	Y	S	■	■	■
Y	R	S	■	E	T	S	■	■	M	E	C	C	A	S
■	■	■	F	L	A	T	B	E	D	T	R	U	C	K
D	E	S	I	■	I	R	A	B	U	■	E	R	I	E
O	Y	E	Z	■	R	E	R	A	N	■	A	I	D	E
G	E	T	Z	■	S	P	A	N	K	■	M	O	S	T

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2/13/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a determined, energized force in this world! When you want something, people step aside. You seek out excitement and never hesitate to express your opinions. Others see you as being boldly uninhibited. Nevertheless, you have a strong sense of yourself. The year ahead is beautifully social and friendly. It promotes all kinds of relationships.

Birthdate of: Peter Gabriel, musician; Stockard Channing, actress; Marc Crawford, NHL coach.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Private time or time spent alone will please you today. You need some solitude in order to sort things out and pull your act together before you take it on the road.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a wonderful day to schmooze with friends! Enjoy the company of others. In particular, artistic friends and younger people (especially from your past) will provide delightful company for you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Quite likely, you'll be asked to give your artistic or creative input at work. This could involve design, layout, redecorating or making something look more attractive somehow. (Clever you.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Travel for pleasure pleases you now and in the next few weeks. Today is a good day to make money in areas connected with publishing, the media, legal matters and medicine.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Be on the lookout for gifts, goodies and favors from others today. These things will definitely come your way. Don't worry about attached strings—just say "thank you."

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a great day to talk to partners, close friends and members of the general public. Sign contracts. Make deals. The expertise of others will benefit you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your ruler Venus is energized by Mars today. This means that relations with coworkers will be particularly productive; you might find new ways of improving your job.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Love affairs, romance, parties, fun occasions and sports are favored today. Playful activities with children will also delight you. Enjoy your day, and have fun!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is the perfect day to buy something beautiful for a family member or for where you live. It's time to redecorate or spruce up your digs.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is an excellent day for negotiations and signing contracts. It's also a wonderful day to enjoy the company of others, especially siblings.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Profits and money can be made today. (There's money in them thar hills!) If shopping, purchases of art and beautiful things will please you and perhaps will become a good investment.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is an excellent day to shop for wardrobe items, because you like what you see in the mirror. Enjoy conversations with partners and close friends.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

7				3				8
	9	5	2			7	4	
		1			8	2		
		3					1	
2								4
	5					3		
		2	4			9		
	7	6			3	8	5	
3				6				2

Difficulty Level ★★

2/13

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	8	7	4	6	2	5	3	9
5	6	4	8	9	3	1	7	2
2	3	9	7	5	1	8	6	4
6	2	8	5	3	4	7	9	1
4	7	3	6	1	9	2	5	8
9	1	5	2	8	7	3	4	6
3	5	6	9	2	8	4	1	7
7	9	2	1	4	5	6	8	3
8	4	1	3	7	6	9	2	5

Difficulty Level ★

STEVEN SPIELBERG

Reality, the movie

From page D1

making a film. It was less of a competition and more of a documentary in its execution.

Here, we have a cross between "American Idol" and "The Apprentice," and a little bit of "Project Greenlight."

Ours is a different show. This is about [giving] opportunities to people who want to be filmmakers or who are filmmakers but want to be discovered.

Who is your target audience?

It's very general. "Survivor," for example, attracts a very wide audience: kids, parents, grandparents. In the US, "Survivor" averages 18 to 19 million people every week. This is another family show, so I think it has a pretty wide audience.

How can you ensure that the best filmmaker will emerge through public voting? The most popular is not necessarily the best.

The word "best" is totally subjective. I mean, it's the same thing on "American Idol" every year. We don't really know if the best singer will win.

But in the end, there are two things that matter in the movie industry: the critics and the box office. With the voting, we're clearly getting a winner based on box office.

[Still] I think you made a good point. It doesn't necessarily mean he or she's the "best," but we will define the winner based on box office and public opinion.

Where is the reality-show genre headed? What is its future? Is the saturation point imminent?

[To be fair,] we can also ask: What is the future of comedy? Drama? Are they dead? Truth is, all over the world, a network's lineup consists of a mixture of news, sports, drama, comedy, reality. It has been proven in the US that not one genre can dominate [the scene].

I suspect that by the end of the latest TV season [in the US], four or five of the Top Ten shows will again be reality. But it's all about quality. In the end, good TV is good TV. A good film is a good film. That's the real arbiter.

Over 60 million people watched the Super Bowl. Over 30 million people watched "American Idol." So the audiences are there, but they are only showing up for what they consider to be great.

What are the TV shows that you enjoy watching?

Apart from my own shows, I really enjoy "American Idol" and "60 Minutes." Also, "Ugly Betty" and "Grey's Anatomy." Obviously, I like my own shows!

What is in store for the winner on this show?

The winner gets a one-year deal, earning half a million dollars. Also, the winner gets a discretionary fund, worth US$500,000, which can be used to buy scripts or hire writers.

There's no guarantee that the movie will get made, however. What is guaranteed is that the winner will work at DreamWorks, developing movies.

If all goes well [though] ... a movie, if it's fast-tracked and fantastic, can be produced by the end of 2008 or early 2009.

Who will have copyright to the film?

I don't know the technical term, but DreamWorks and I are partners in this project [with] the director ... But the actual copyright belongs to the movie studios, like any other film.

What are your next projects?

I am now actively working with writers to produce my own movie. I definitely want to be in the film industry, but I didn't do this [show] because of this. It's just a coincidence. This year, I also agreed to produce the MTV Movie Awards. It's a big "film" year for me—with the movie, the MTV awards and "On the Lot."

Are you turning your back on TV?

It's not that the TV industry is unstable. It's just that we don't know what the distribution will be like in five to 10 years. Exactly how we're going to get content—whether on a telephone, cell phone, computer or television—that I don't know.

[What I'm sure of is that] creative producers, writers and actors will still be around to provide content. [That's why] I'll still continue with my TV career. My company is evolving. Now, we make content for TV, movies and the Internet.

OPENS TOMORROW!
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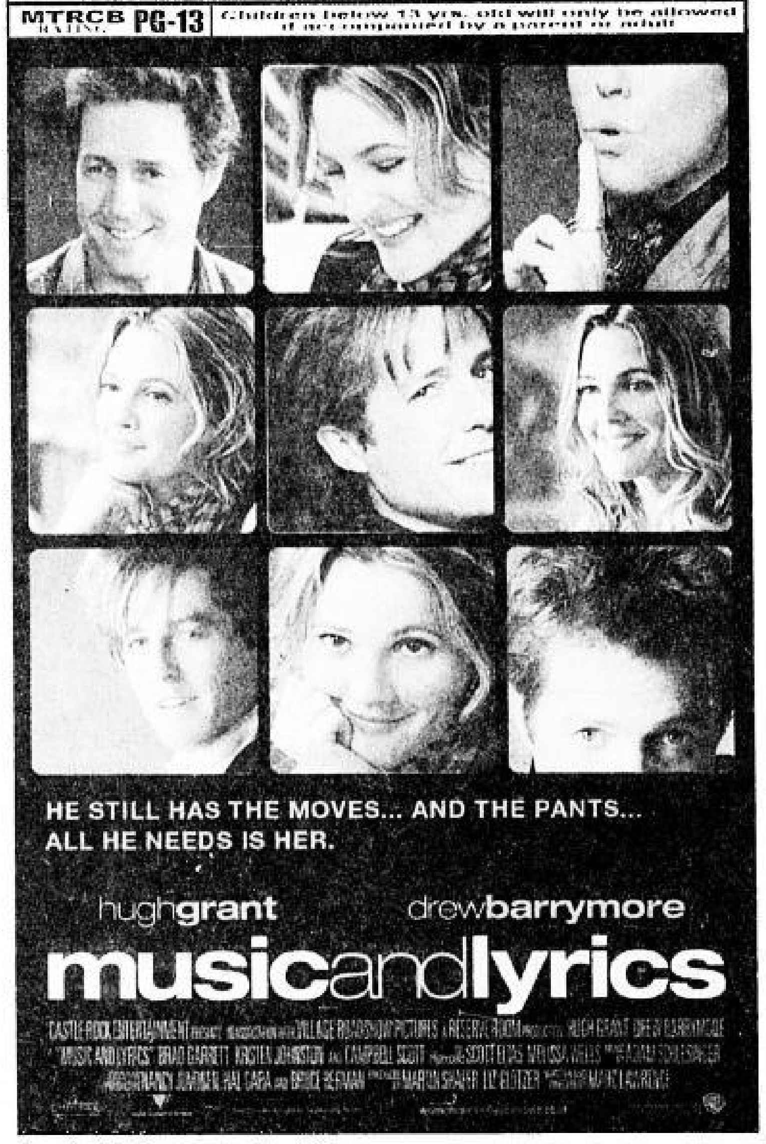
HE STILL HAS THE MOVES... AND THE PANTS...
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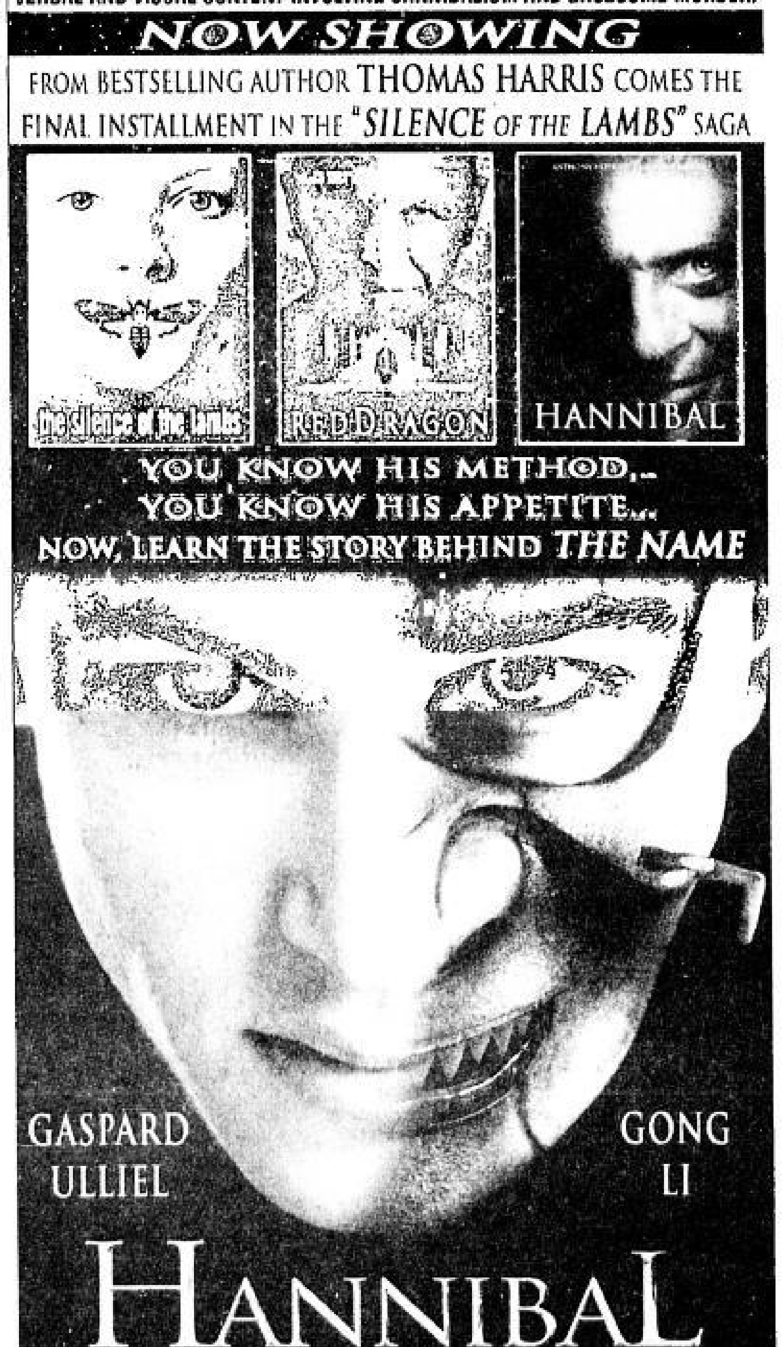
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1 NIGHT at the MUSEUM • THX	12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
2 THE HOLIDAY	1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
3 indieSine: COMPOUND	1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10.00
5 HANNIBAL RISING	12.00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
6 THE MESSENGERS	12.20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
7 THE CLEANER	1:25 3:35 5.45 7:55 10:00
8 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE	12:00 2:10 4:20
LITTLE CHILDREN	6:40 9:40
9 APOCALYPTO	1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00
10 CHARLOTTE's WEB	1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00

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1 THE HOLIDAY	11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00
2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
3 HANNIBAL RISING	12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00
4 THE CLEANER	12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
5 THE MESSENGERS	12:20 2:20 4:20 6.20 8.25 10:00
6 APOCALYPTO	12:35 3:40 6:45 10:00
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2 THE MESSENGERS	12:50 2:50 4.50 6.50 9.00
3 APOCALYPTO	12:30 3:10 6:00 9:00
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	12:00 2:10 4:20 6:40 9:00
5 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	1:20 3:55 6:30 9.05
6 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE	12:00 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10
7 HANNIBAL RISING	12.50 3:35 6.20 9:05
8 THE HOLIDAY	12:30 3:10 6:00 9:00

NOVALICHES

[illegible]

1 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 THE CLEANER
5 APOCALYPTO

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1 THE HOLIDAY	12:05 2:55 5:45 8:35
2 THE MESSENGERS	1:10 3:35 6.00 8.25
3 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	1:30 3:55 6:20 8.40
4 HANNIBAL RISING	12:55 3.25 5:55 8:25

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- Paul Daza, Philippine Daily Inquirer

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4 THE MESSENGERS

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1 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
2 TENACIOUS D
3 AGENT X44
4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE

DASMARIÑAS

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2 APOCALYPTO
3 THE CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

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3 THE MESSENGERS
4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER

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3 THE HOLIDAY
4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
5 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

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3 AGENT X44
4 THE MESSENGERS
5 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
6 APOCALYPTO

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2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 AGENT X44
6 TENACIOUS D

ILOILO

Ticket Price: P60.50/67.50/70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 CHARLOTTE's WEB
2 AGENT X44
3 SPIRIT TRAP
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 BLOOD DIAMOND

indieSine Featured FILM for next week

Rome and Juliet

starring: Mylene Dizon and Andrea del Rosario

This tale follows the romantic journey of two straight women caught in a web of forbidden love. Juliet, a conservative pre-school teacher hires Rome, a liberated businesswoman to be her wedding planner. As they go through the preparations, the two develop a relationship that the groom to be soon finds out.

CHOOSE YOUR Valentine SHOW

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR. AND so, once again, we are helping you pick the best show for that special date, by asking the concert artists who are going onstage what they have in store for audiences.

Jolina Magdangal

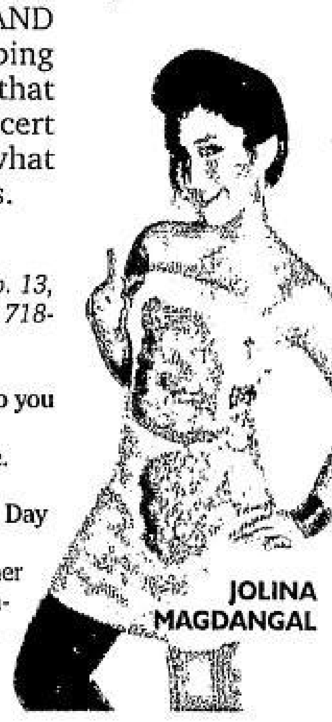
"Songs of Love," with Session Road, Feb. 13, Trade Hall, Star Mall Edsa-Shaw. Call 718-1886.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

I celebrate it with the people special to me.

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you've ever experienced?

Romantic and unique! Bebong (Muñoz, her boyfriend) and I celebrated it through the Internet. He was still in the United States then. We used a web cam and had wine during our online date!



JOLINA MAGDANGAL

What's an ideal Valentine date?

An "ideal" date for me is to be with someone you really love. To go somewhere cozy and relaxing. It would be great if it's somewhere cool so that we can cuddle! *May lambingan*! Hihihi! *Kilig*!

Who's your fantasy date?

For a real person, I'd pick Josh Groban. I'd love for him to sing a love song only for me. As for a fictional character, Michael Scofield (played by Wentworth Miller on "Prison Break"). It's okay even if we are jailed together! Hahaha!

What's the most romantic love song?

It's the timeless "Somewhere in Time." Also, "Got to Believe in Magic" and "After All" (from the movie "Chances Are").

If you were not doing a show, who would you watch?

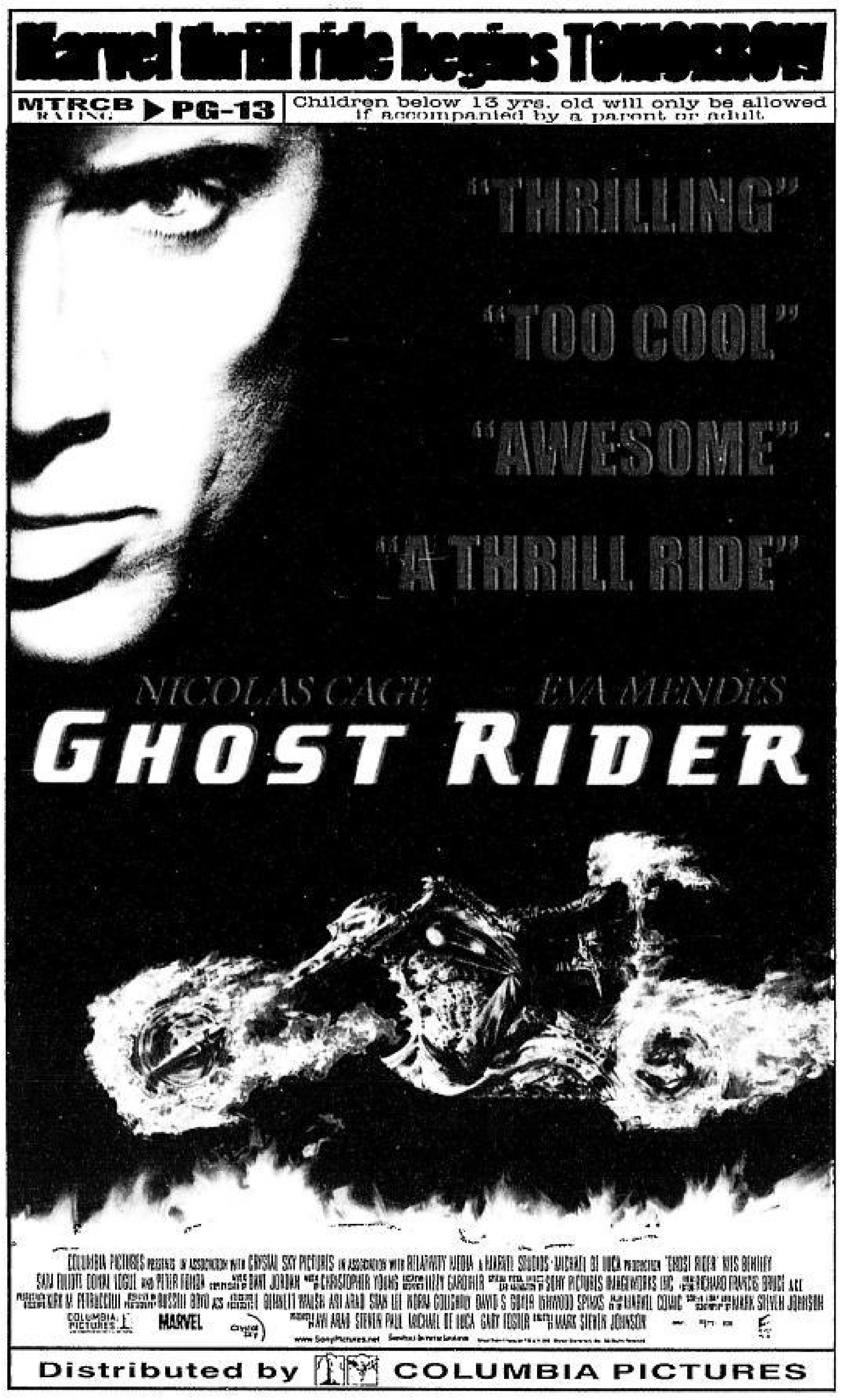
David Pomeranz. He's been my idol for the longest time. The first time I worked with him was on "A.S.A.P." He was so nice to me. Later, when I was on a US tour, he volunteered to guest in my concert. My dad and his wife have been exchanging e-mails since. In my CD "Jolina Sings the Masters," David did two songs for me—one is "Teach Me to Fly," which I sang in Yokohama, Japan.

Why should we watch your show?

It's on Feb. 13 and traffic is not so bad *pa* that day. And our show is at 5:30 p.m. If you get there before the show starts, you can still shop in the mall. Apart from me, the Session Road band will also be there to serenade you and your partner. *Bayani San Diego Jr.*

More shows

- An evening of romantic music and dancing with Sitti happens on Feb. 14 at Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila. Call 245-1234 loc. 7803.
- Centro Flamenco stages "Pasion y Fuego," a Valentine dance concert on Feb. 16 and 17 at the Music Museum, with Lucy Torres Gomez and the Hotlegs. Call 751-2243.
- Ai Ai de las Alas and Ogie Alcasid promise a night of love and laughter in "Love to Laugh" on Feb. 13 and 14 at the Music Museum. Call 435-1120.



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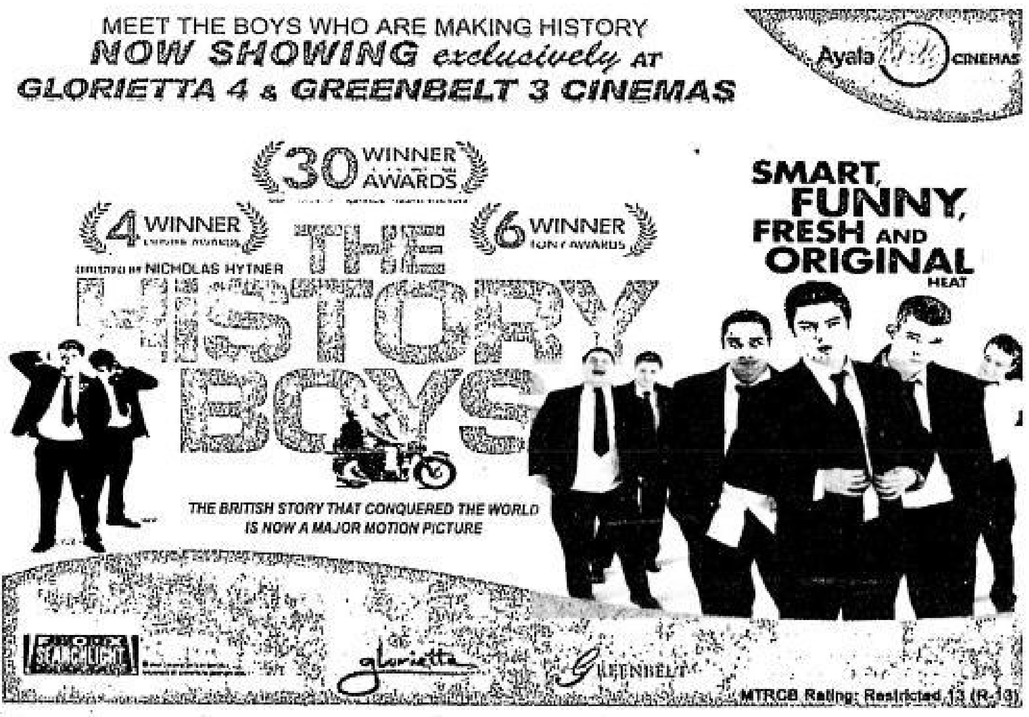

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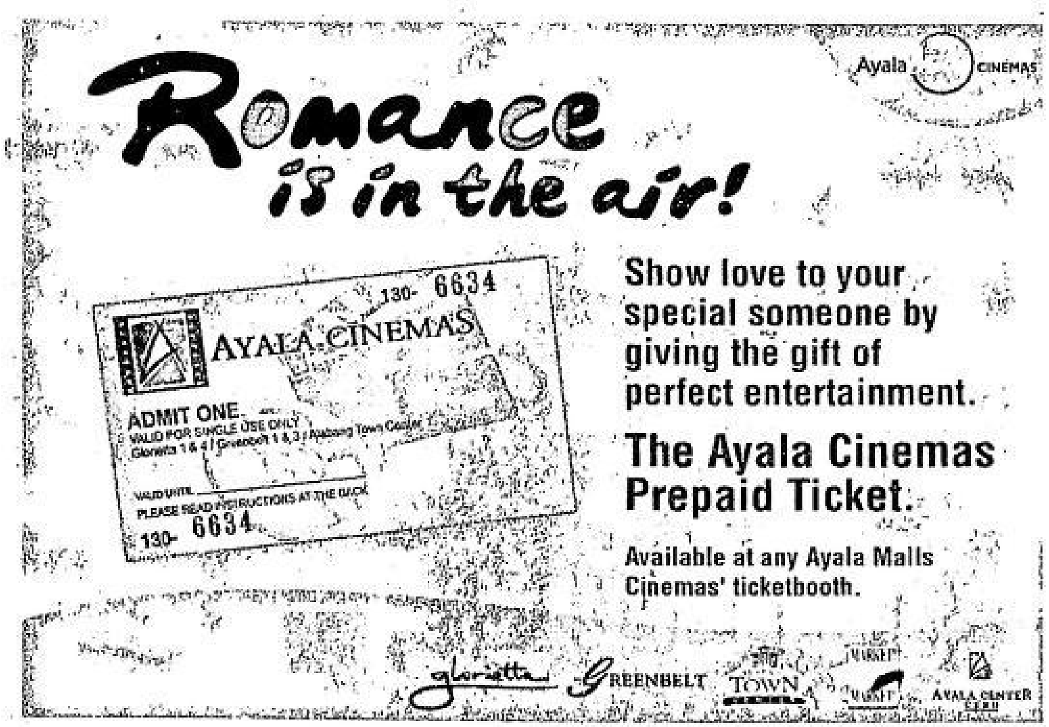

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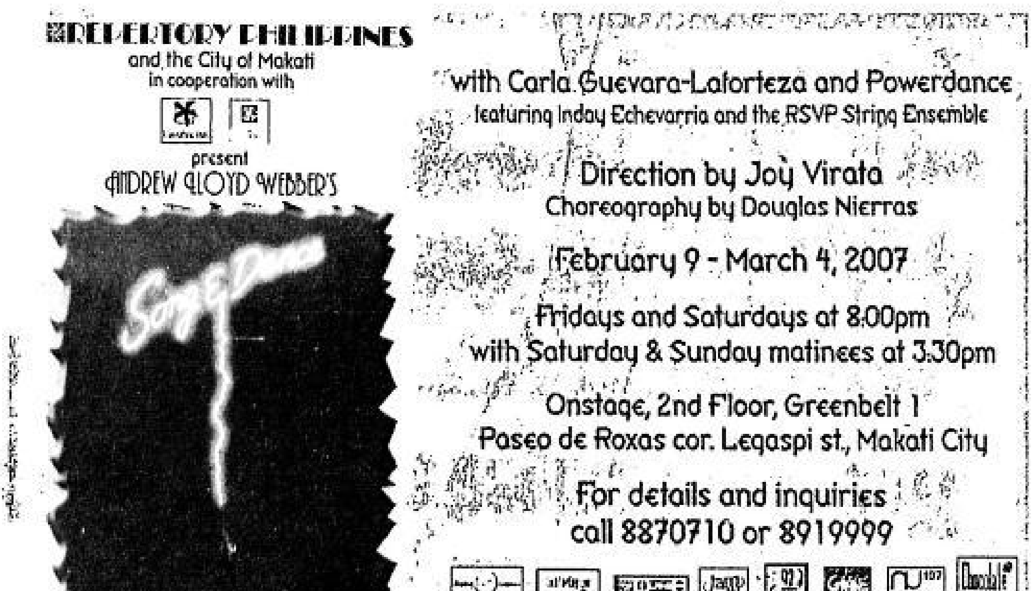

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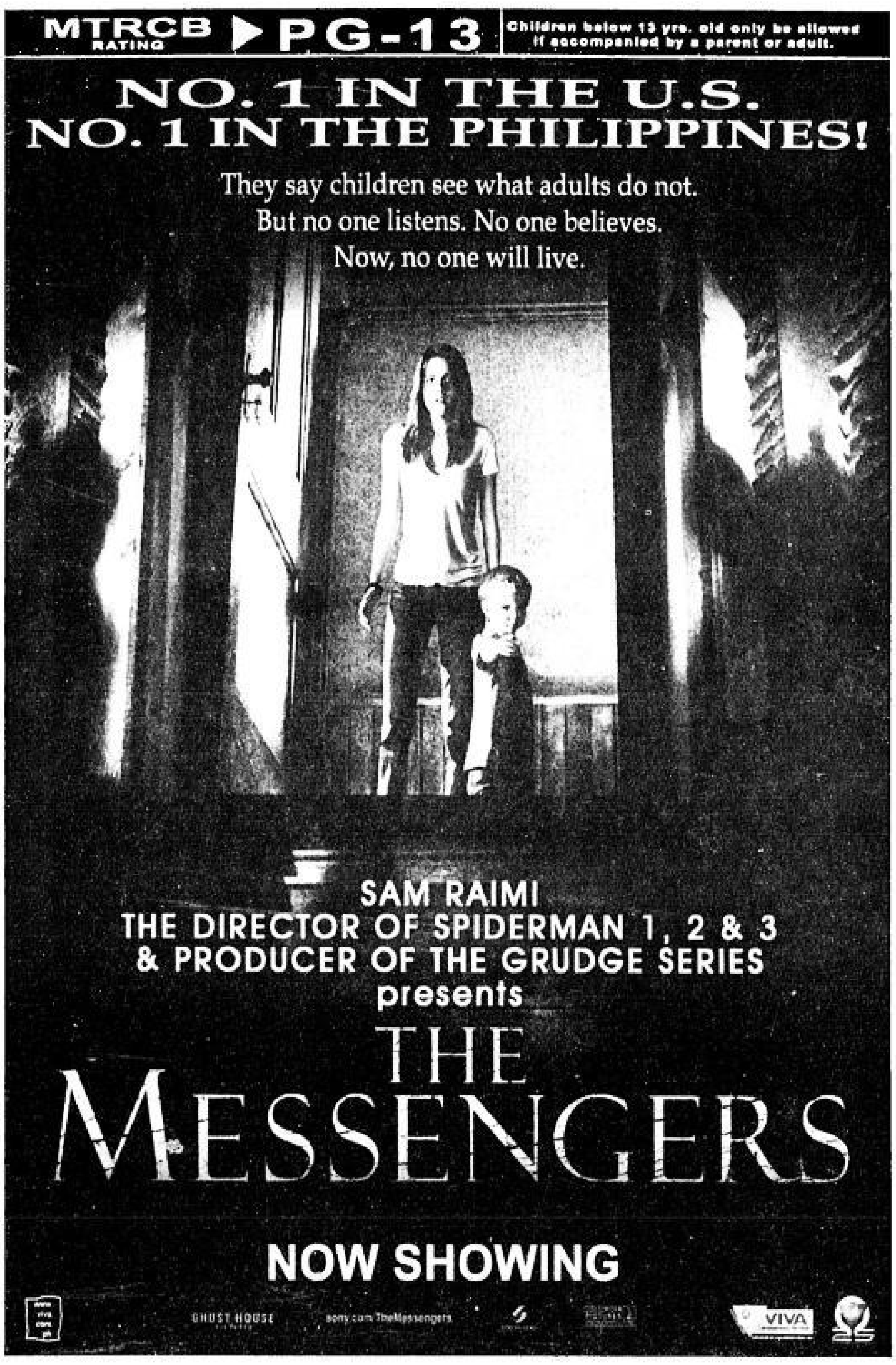

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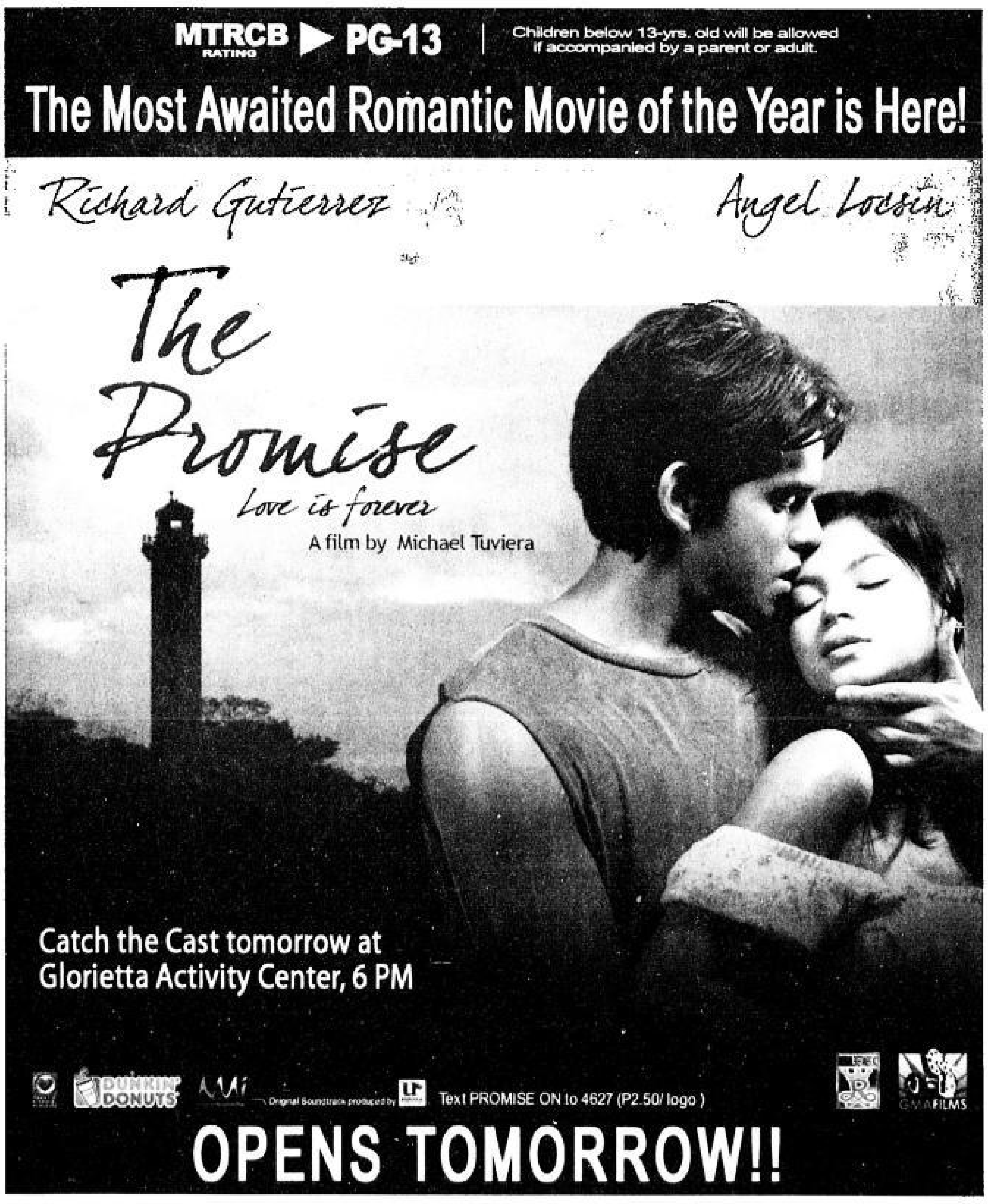

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GMA FILMS
OPENS TOMORROW!!

NEWS / A2

Salonga: Gonzalez interim appointment has lapsed; he's now illegally holding DOJ post

WORLD / A27

Iraq bomb blasts kill 95 in 2 days

NEWS/ A2

North Korea agrees to shut down main nuclear reactor

ACROSS/ A21

The love story of Diosdado Macapagal and Purita de la Rosa

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
NCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
uary 14, 2007 ★★ 13 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 68 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

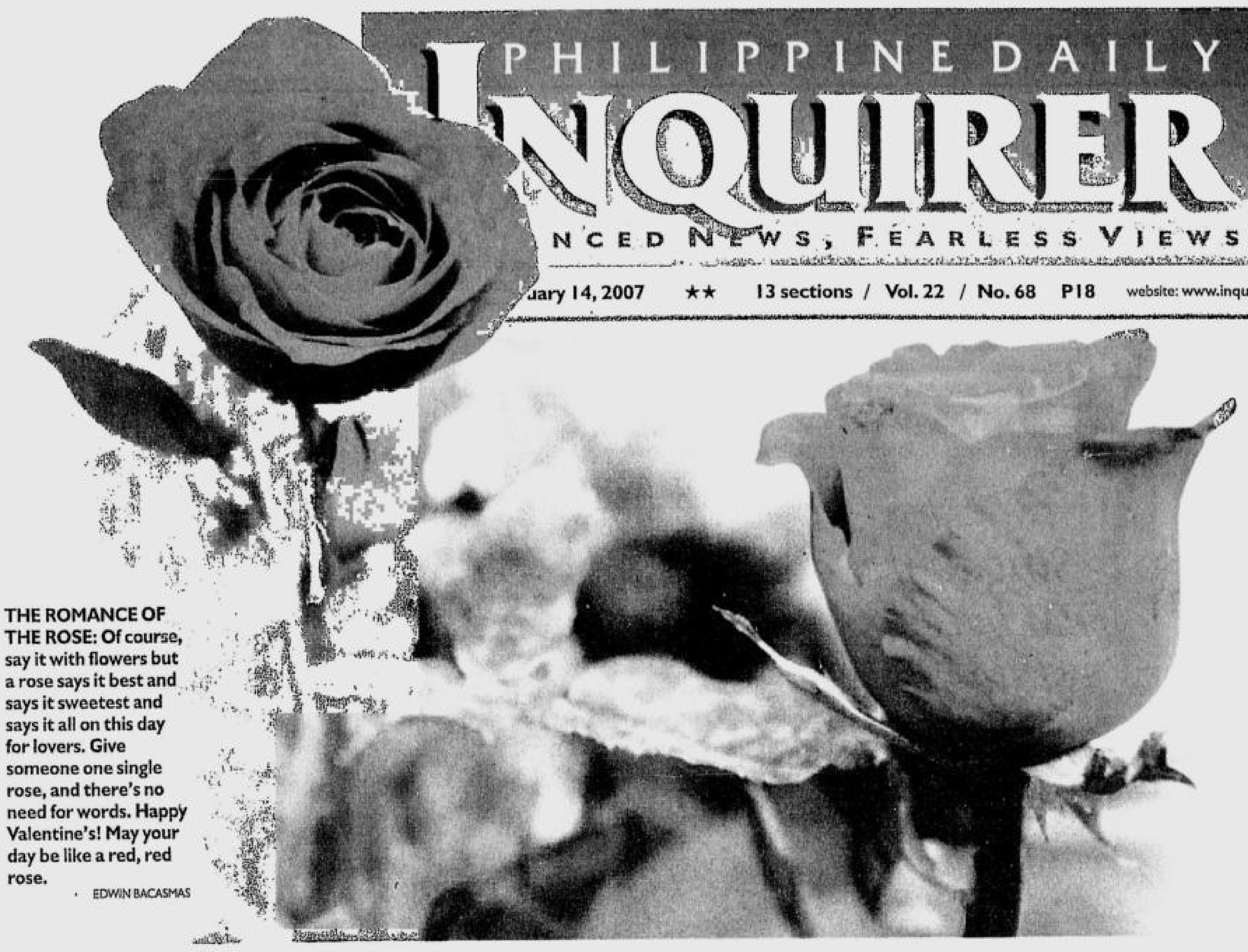
In the end, the 'torpe' gets the girl, says study

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

HINDI KASI ASINTADO SI KUPIDO!

BAGUIO CITY—HERE'S THE real stuff of romance, at least among the students in this summer capital: In the end, the *torpe* gets the girl.

IN THE END/ A9



THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE: Of course, say it with flowers but a rose says it best and says it sweetest and says it all on this day for lovers. Give someone one single rose, and there's no need for words. Happy Valentine's! May your day be like a red, red rose. EDWIN BACASMAS

7 of 10 Filipinos believe 'love is blind,' SWS survey finds

SHAKESPEARE SAID IT FIRST AND IT STILL RINGS true today—"[But] love is blind and lovers cannot see/The pretty follies that themselves commit."

Seven of every 10 Filipinos believe this to be so, with nearly half (47 percent) saying that they had experienced or felt it, according to a recent survey of the Social Weather Stations.

More women (72 percent) said "yes" when asked: "Do you believe in the saying, 'Love is blind?'"

Nearly one of every two (49 percent) also said "Yes" to the follow-up question: "If so, can you say you have already experienced it?"

Of the men, 68 percent said they believed that "love is blind" and 45 percent said they had experienced it.

According to the survey, more men tend to believe that "love is blind" as they grow older, while there was no difference among women across age groups.

Belief that "love is blind" is slightly higher among

7 OF 10 FILIPINOS/ A9

24 RP seamen released

No ransom asked by Nigerian kidnappers

ABUJA, NIGERIA — Their Nigerian kidnappers have released all 24 Filipino seamen they had been holding captive in the creeks of the oil-producing Niger Delta since Jan. 20, the men's employer, German shipping firm Baco-Liner, said yesterday.

The kidnappers said they freed the men "on humanitarian grounds" without receiving any ransom, following the intervention of local elders and authorities. Most abductions in the anarchic Niger Delta are resolved after money changes hands.

"All 24 hostages are on board our vessel, Baco-Liner 2, and they're on their way to Warri now where they will be handed over directly to our agent," a spokesperson for the company said, referring to the main city in the western delta.

He said the men were tired but in good health.

In Manila, President Macapagal-Arroyo welcomed the release, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

"The President is very pleased and relieved to hear this good news. She thanks the Nigerian government for their valuable assistance and likewise commends the DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) in our post in

24 RP SEAMEN/ A8

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER for Human Rights special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston, crosses Edsa from Camp Crame to Camp Aguinaldo on Tuesday. JOAN BONDOC

JOVITO PALPARAN KILLED MY FATHER!!!
PEOPLE'S MARTYRS
JOVITO PALPA
MR ALSTON HEAR US LET THE TRUTH PREVAIL!
TICAL

WELCOMING, HOPING: Militant groups and relatives of victims of political killings in Southern Tagalog stage a rally in front of Camps Crame and Aguinaldo while Alston visits the two camps for a round of meetings with the top brass. JOAN BONDOC

EU, UN need Melo report to help in RP probe

By Cynthia D. Balana and Alcuin Papa

THE EUROPEAN UNION VIEWS "very seriously" the unabated killing of leftist activists in the Philippines and wants to help the government conduct a more transparent investigation.

But first, according to Eneko Landaburu, director general for external relations of the European Commission, it needs a copy of the report of the Melo Commission which President Macapagal-Arroyo formed in August 2006 to look into the killings.

"The Philippines and the EC agreed on the importance of protecting human rights and on the need to properly investigate unexplained killings. Our position is, of course, to support all the efforts made by the government in order to identify the perpetrators and to prevent further killings," Landaburu said yesterday at a joint press conference held jointly with the Department of Foreign Affairs on the 5th Philippines-European

EU, UN TO HELP/ A8

Villar with UNO but he's going 'solo'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL Villar will go "solo" on the campaign trail to win a fresh six-year term in the Senate despite agreeing to sign on as a guest candidate of the United Opposition (UNO).

Villar said no conditions were set for his inclusion in the opposition slate.

"I did not ask [for] anything and I will not give anything. There is just an understanding and camaraderie," Villar said in an interview with reporters.

Villar said he was not compelled to place UNO on his campaign posters and in his television spots and radio jingles.

Opposition senatorial candidate Francis Escudero said it was Villar's loss if he campaigned without the rest of the UNO ticket.

"How can we help him if he's not with us on sorties? With our meager resources, how can we put up tarpaulins for him at our rallies or come up with vehicles carrying his name in motorcades?" Escudero said.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said Villar and Sen. Francis Pangilinan's claim of being independent candidates was a "political tactic" so they would not turn off supporters among President Macapagal-Arroyo's allies.

"That's just for show. Since they agreed (to be guest candidates), for all intents and purposes, they are opposition," Pimentel said.

VILLAR/ A10

Pasig River ferry sails again thru RP's 1st highway

By Joan Orendain
Contributor

STRIKE A WIN FOR COMMUTERS—the Pasig River Ferry Service is coming on line today with two boats, cutting travel time for them by as much as 80 percent. Fares, too, will cost at least a third less—another win.

The launch of the service will be conducted by President Macapagal-Arroyo herself. Ferry Passenger No. 1 will sail down the Pasig in air-conditioned comfort in a twin-hulled catamaran 24.5 meters long by 7 meters wide.

Catamarans are more stable than single-hulls, provide a wider deck, and are more comfortable. Each vessel has a capacity of 152 passengers. Two earth-friendly diesel engines of 355 horsepower each will run at an average operating speed of 10 knots.

Apart from commuters receiving the welcome addition to their range of transport choices, the Mutya ng (Sweetheart of the) Pasig also would be pleased. A figure of legend attached to the romance of the Philippines' first highway, passengers may view her beauty out of panoramic windows—where areas are relatively unspoiled.

Five of 10 terminals along the Pasig have been built and are ready for operation. These

PASIG RIVER/ A8

When cool charmer meets Pacman deadly embrace

By Christian V. Esguerra

CAN HER CHARM WITHSTAND one of the deadliest punchers in boxing?

The fight to be the representative of South Cotabato (1st district) will pit reelectionist Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio against Manny Pacquiao, who was voted the top pound-for-pound boxer in the world for 2006 by Ring Magazine.

The first district includes General Santos City, hometown of Pacquiao, a former bakery and construction worker.

But the 33-year-old Custodio, who is seeking her third and last term, doesn't seem fazed by the prospect of going against the hugely popular Pacquiao.

"I wasn't shocked or anything," she told the INQUIRER yesterday. "I knew even before that he was going to run."

Pacquiao on Monday declared that he would seek the congressional seat of his hometown, running under the pro-administration wing of the Liberal Party.

WHEN COOL/ A10

Chiz to Joker: You abandoned rule of law

By Norman Bordadora

HOUSE MINORITY LEADER Francis Escudero said it was Sen. Joker Arroyo who abandoned the constitutional process in 2001 and paved the way for then President Joseph Estrada's downfall.

Escudero, a Senate candidate of the United Opposition that Arroyo and Sen. Ralph Recto had shunned, said Arroyo took the unconstitutional route when he led the walkout of House prosecutors from the Senate impeachment court in January 2001.

"Who abandoned the impeachment process in 2001? Who between us abandoned the constitutional process?" said Escudero in a telephone interview.

CHIZ TO JOKER/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2007

EZ2
⑨ ㉑ | SIX DIGIT ② ⓪ ⑥ ⑤ ⑧ ⑤

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening
④ ② ⓪ | ① ④ ①
(All in exact order)

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/02/13/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Gonzalez overstaying, says Salonga

MALACAÑANG HAS BEEN ABUSING ITS AUTHORity to appoint Cabinet secretaries in an acting capacity to circumvent confirmation by the congressional Commission on Appointments, according to former Senate president Jovito Salonga.

Salonga cited the case of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez who has been serving in an acting capacity for three years. Gonzalez was appointed on Aug. 23, 2004.

"Appointments in an acting capacity cannot exceed one year as expressly provided in Section 17, Chapter 5 of Executive Order 292," he said.

Salonga said the law incorporated this safeguard to prevent abuses, like the use of acting appointments as a way of circumventing congressional confirmation.

Salonga referred to an Oct. 13, 2005 ruling of the Supreme Court citing EO 292, a chapter of which is devoted to the President's power of appointments.

Section 17 of the presidential order states that the President "may temporarily designate an officer already in the government service or any other competent person to perform the functions of an office in the executive branch."

But in no case should the temporary designation exceed one year, Salonga said.

The former PCGG chair said he has sent a copy of the Supreme Court decision to Senate President Manuel Villar, the commission chair.

He said Villar "was overjoyed" and had remarked that the ruling "will hit Raul Gonzalez."

A day before Congress adjourned last week, Gonzalez was again bypassed by the CA. The President will need to reappoint him.

Gonzalez could not be reached for comment. *Jerry E. Esplanada*

North Korea agrees to end nuke program

BEIJING—NORTH KOREA AGREED Tuesday after arduous talks to shut down its main nuclear reactor and eventually dismantle its atomic weapons program, just four months after the communist state shocked the world by testing a nuclear bomb.

The deal marks the first concrete plan for disarmament in more than three years of six-nation negotiations. The plan could also potentially herald a new era of cooperation in the region with the North's longtime foes—the United States and Japan—agreeing to discuss normalizing relations with Pyongyang.

"Obviously we have a long way to go, but we're very pleased with this agreement," US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill told reporters. "It's a very solid step forward." *(See earlier story in The World, Page A26.)*

Making sure that Pyongyang declared all its nuclear facilities and shut them down was likely to prove difficult, nuclear experts had said.

North Korea had sidestepped previous agreements, allegedly running a uranium-based weapons program even as it froze a plutonium-based one—sparking the latest nuclear crisis in late 2002. The country is believed to have countless mountain tunnels in which to hide projects.

"We don't have an agreement at this point even on the existence of this program but I certainly have made very clear repeatedly that we need to ensure that we know precisely the status of that," Hill said.

Under the deal, the North would receive initial aid equal to 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil for shutting down and sealing its main nuclear reactor and related facilities at Yongbyon, north of the capital, within 60 days, to be confirmed by international inspectors.

For irreversibly disabling the reactor and declaring all nuclear programs, the North will eventually receive another 950,000 tons of oil in aid.

One million tons of oil would be equivalent to more than two-thirds of North Korea's entire oil consumption in 2004, according to the CIA Factbook.

The agreement was read to all the delegates in a conference room at a Chinese state guesthouse and Chinese envoy Wu Dawei asked if there were any objections. When none were made, the officials all stood and applauded. *AP*

Singapore PM here for state visit

By Michael Lim Ubac and Tarra Quismundo

ARRIVAL HONORS for Singapore Prime Minister Nathan at the Palace grounds. EDWIN BACASMAS

SINGAPORE PRESIDENT SELLApan Rama Nathan arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) yesterday for a four-day state visit aimed at further strengthening bilateral ties between the city-state and the Philippines.

Nathan's visit will usher in President Macapagal-Arroyo's turnover of the chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian nations (Asean) to Singapore, which formally takes place in June.

Foyer honors were accorded the Singaporean leader who arrived via Singapore Airlines Flight 72 yesterday at 1:15 p.m.

Vice President Noli de Castro welcomed Nathan and his wife, Urmila Nandey, at the concourse area of Naia's Terminal 1.

Philippine Air Force (PAF) commanding general Lt. Gen. Horacio Tolentino and PAF honor guards ushered Nathan and his wife through a red carpet and to a waiting vehicle.

At dusk, Nathan was given arrival honors at the Malacañang Palace courtyard before meeting with Ms Arroyo in the Palace music room.

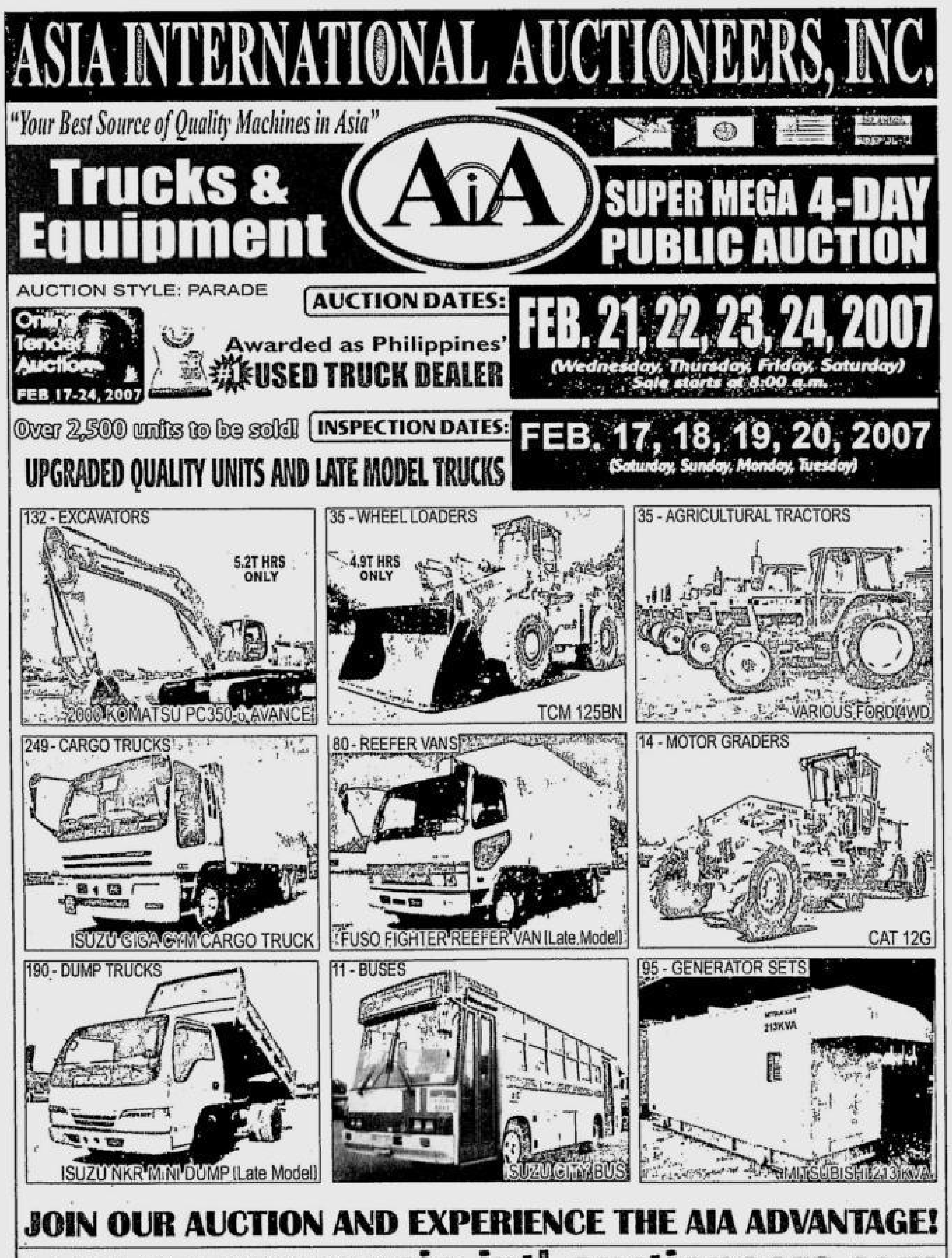
This was followed by a state dinner for the visiting leader.

Today, Nathan has a full schedule, starting with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Rizal monument in Manila.

He will also visit Fort Santiago in Intramuros, Manila, tour the San Agustin and the Ayala museums, and visit the Gawad Kalinga housing project in Baseco, Manila.

He will have a private lunch with Ambassador Lim Kheng Hua and dinner with the Singaporean community in Makati.

On Thursday, Nathan will go to Calamba and Los Baños, Laguna, and will fly back to Singapore on Friday.



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Cayetano vs Cayetano: Cheap shot, says one

By Christian V. Esguerra

SENATORIAL BET REP. ALAN PETER Cayetano yesterday asked the Commission on Elections to junk the bid of a namesake—Jose Pepito "Peter" Cayetano—for being a nuisance candidate.

"This is a cheap shot," Cayetano told the INQUIRER. "Unfortunately, we didn't stop the dirty tricks department of Malacañang from doing it."

Cayetano noted that his namesake's candidacy had been endorsed by the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) and lawyer Oliver Lozano, a perceived supporter of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Lozano had filed impeachment complaints against the President in the House in 2005 and 2006 but this was widely seen as a ruse to in reality prevent Ms Arroyo's ouster as the complaints were deemed to be "insufficient in form" and were subsequently junked by the House.

"It's interesting that it's the same Lozano who had weakened the impeachment advocacy who's now endorsed the candidacy of this Peter Cayetano," the congressman said.

Cayetano said that when his late father Rene and his sister Pia ran for the Senate in the administration ticket in the past, they were not faced with the same problem.

"But now that I'm running and I'm a vocal critic of graft and corruption under the Arroyo administration, there's suddenly this problem," he said.

Cayetano has been critical of the First Family, accusing it of having a secret multimillion-dollar bank account in Germany—a charge he, however, has failed to prove.

He cited the Comelec provision barring the filing of certificates of candidacy (COCs) aimed at putting "the election process in mockery or disrepute or to cause confusion among the voters by the similarity of names of registered candidates."

In a radio interview yesterday, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said the poll body would study the legitimacy of the other Cayetano's candidacy.

But since this Cayetano had been endorsed by a legitimate political party like the KBL, Abalos said there was a possibility he won't be dismissed as a nuisance candidate. If that happens, he said, a vote entered simply as "Cayetano" would be nullified. *With Nikko Dizon and Michael Lim Ubac*

GMA wants high-level campaign

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO WANTS her allies to observe a "high-level campaign" and avoid "muckraking and mudslinging" during their campaign sorties across the country.

"What the President wants is a high-level campaign, and she has very clear instructions to members of the (administration) parties to avoid muckraking, mudslinging, and stick to the issues," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

He said the administration would "take the higher road and stick by the rules."

In a press briefing, Bunye provided reporters with an eight-point issue that the administration's national and local candidates should focus on.

Dubbed, "8 in 08," these are more job creation, further reduction in the cost of living, strong peso, more investments, better education, better health care/housing/hunger mitigation, better environment/green Philippines, and strong antiterror measures.

Amid opposition's determination to make the still unresolved "Hello, Garci" wiretapping scandal as one of its campaign issues, Bunye said administration candidates should "try to persuade people to engage in a bandwagon for positive change."

"We want the elections to be fair and square, and the marching orders of the President, as far as the (Unity) Team is concerned is to engage in high-level politics," Bunye said.

He said the President and her Unity Team ticket for senators would "like to take the high road."

"We hope everybody campaigns in that manner," said Bunye.

Bunye, however, declined to comment on the allegation that the administration was behind the candidacy of a certain Joselito Pepito Cayetano to derail House Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano's bid to win a seat in the Senate.

Be wary of migratory birds, public told

OFFICIALS URGED PEOPLE YESTERDAY NOT to touch migratory birds in case they are infected with the H5N1 bird flu virus.

"You can watch, but don't capture or touch migratory birds," said Theresa Mundita Lim, director of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau.

The Philippines, a known sanctuary for migratory birds, has remained free of the virus that has killed at least 166 people worldwide. But the death of an egret early this month, believed to have flown from Japan, has sparked concern.

"There is no evidence at this time that would prove that the egret died of avian influenza," Lim said, adding it was not wise to exhume the bird for testing. "The egret has a leg band that indicated it came from Japan."

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes also urged the public to help government monitors by looking out for multiple deaths among both domestic poultry and migratory waterbirds.

"The Philippines is still bird flu-free, but the threat of the virus is ever present," Reyes said in a statement. "There is an upsurge in bird flu cases in Asia, Europe and Africa and we hear reports of new cases in several countries. We do not want that to happen here."

The countries reporting new cases include Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, South Korea, Japan, Egypt, Nigeria, Hungary and Russia.

The government "has instituted measures to minimize the probability of entry of the deadly virus. We can take precautionary measures by taking surveillance of areas where migratory birds congregate," Reyes said.

Surveillance at airports and seaports was also stepped up to stop the smuggling of wild birds and poultry, Reyes said.

Also yesterday, the agriculture department and the New Zealand embassy officially inaugurated an avian influenza field laboratory that would serve as the country's early warning system in Northern Pampanga.

The $340,000 (P16.4 million) facility started testing operations in December and had so far tested negative serum samples on 6,000 ducks and chickens.

AFP, Reuters

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CENTRE

Oil firms cut LPG prices by 56¢

By Abigail L. Ho

FOR THE SECOND TIME IN LESS than a week, the oil companies reduced the price of liquefied petroleum gas by 56 centavos a kilogram, inclusive of the 12-percent value-added tax.

Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Chevron Phil. all brought down the prices of their cooking gas products just after midnight last night.

As with the last price adjustment announced last week, they cited the declining international contract price of LPG as the reason for the reduction.

The LPG Marketers Association adjusted prices by the same level a day earlier. It said another price reduction, possibly in the same amount, could be expected within the month.

According to data from the energy department, the international contract price for LPG dropped to $526 per metric ton (MT) this month, after soaring to $527.50 per MT in January.

The price reduction is the second for the year, amounting to P1.12 per kilogram.

With today's price adjustment, an 11-kg LPG cylinder will now cost P6.16 less.

Just last month, the local oil companies increased LPG prices "to start reflecting the cumulative increase in international contract prices for December and January."

"It must be noted that we did not move LPG prices in December despite an equivalent increase in contract prices by P1.20 per kilogram. For January, the contract price increase is equivalent to P1.80 per kilogram," Petron said at the time.

It said that its last LPG price increase was implemented in September. Since then, it had reduced prices three times.

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Budget to undergo line veto

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE FIRST-EVER TRILLION-PESO NATIONAL budget, or the General Appropriations Act of 2007, is filled with last-minute "insertions" by the bicameral conference committee that President Macapagal-Arroyo will "line veto" before signing the measure into law.

The President, however, said she did not know the specific items to be crossed out just yet.

"No, I can't give it to you right now because (Budget) Secretary (Rolando) Andaya will be giving me the list of the items to be line-vetoed," she said.

A line veto happens when an authority goes over a bill "line by line" and vetoes or disapproves certain items.

Andaya declined to identify the budget items to be axed when reached for comment yesterday.

In a press briefing, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye admitted an "initial report" by Andaya stated "there will be some vetoes of line items as had been done in the past."

"The important thing is we are able to fund the basic services that are needed by the people," Bunye said.

When pressed for details, he said Andaya was the one to ask about the vetoes, but "the objective is to avoid the insertion (of line items in the bicam) which was also the practice in the past."

Insertions are allocations put into the budget during the bicam meetings. They were not in the original versions of the budget bill passed by both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Bunye said the President would veto several items since she "wants a lean-and-mean budget focused on modernizing the economy, providing the infrastructure to boost investments and jobs, and bringing reliable basic services to every household."

"This is a people's budget that will be spent on the people's needs and nothing else," he said.

Corrections

IN THE FEB. 12 issue, a story on Page A20—"Why 'Kiko' is 'going solo'"—misstated that Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan called for the resignation of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo during her impeachment trial. The President was never impeached, and there was no impeachment trial.

* * *

THE SAME article misspelled the first name of a Filipino singer. The performer's name is Gary—not Garry—Valenciano.

* * *

IN THE FEB. 8 issue, Conrado de Quiros' column on Page A10—"Footnote to doomsday"—misspelled the first name of an American senator. The senator's name is Hillary—not Hilary—Clinton. The same mistake appeared in the Feb. 11 article "Year of the women," which was published on Page F2 of the Lifestyle section.

* * *

IN THE FEB. 10 issue, a story on Page A5—"P10,000-plate dinner for Loren a big hit"—misspelled the name of one of the dishes served during a fundraising dinner for former Sen. Loren Legarda's senatorial bid. The dish is black mushroom with abalone—not avalon mushroom.

* * *

IN THE SAME issue, an article on Page A16—"Hot air balloons soar in RP skies"—misspelled the name of the gas that fuels burners used in hot air balloons. The gas is propane—not profane.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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‘Lifestyle’ probers hale Customs couple to Ombudsman

By Volt Contreras

“LIFESTYLE” INVESTIGATORS yesterday lodged a complaint at the Ombudsman against a husband-and-wife tandem at the Bureau of Customs for allegedly amassing wealth “grossly disproportionate” to their salaries.

Spouses Teotimo and Vivian Sacluti, both customs examiners now in their third decade at the BOC, were able to acquire prime lots in Quezon City, buy several vehicles, and go on tours overseas despite their combined “modest earnings” to date of only about P30,000 a month, probers said.

The complaint noted, though, that the couple has been running a business on the side, albeit undisclosed in their annual Statements of Assets and Liabilities and Net Worth (SALNs).

Some 40 complaints stemming from the so-called lifestyle checks have been filed by the Department of Finance since the creation of its Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS) in 2003 to investigate questionable millionaires among officials and employees of the DOF and attached agencies like the BOC.

3 Pinays all set for Everest

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE THREE FEMALE mountaineers hoping to be the first Southeast Asian women to reach Mt. Everest’s summit are leaving for Nepal next month despite limited funds, but armed with months of training and the guidance of two Filipinos who scaled the same mountain last year.

Noelle Wenceslao, Carina Dayondon and Janet Belarmino will go to Mt. Everest in March so that they can acclimatize, and will attempt to scale the world’s highest peak in May, the same month that Filipinos Leo Oracion, Pastor Emata and Romy Garduce reached the summit last year.

Oracion and Emata are helping the girls prepare themselves mentally for the task and will act as base camp guides when they climb Mt. Everest.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), to which the three women as well as Oracion and Emata belong, has teamed up with the Philippine Airlines Mountaineering Club (PALMC) to help raise P8 million for the endeavor, dubbed “The Unity Climb.”

PCG Commandant Vice-Admiral Damian Carlos said the PCG and the PALMC would host a golf tournament in the second week of March to raise the needed funds for their travel expenses, permits and sherpa guides.

Arlyn dela Cruz of the PALMC appealed to the public to support the team’s efforts.

Wenceslao said she and her companions have undergone the necessary physical training, including Alpine climbs.

“Since 2004, we have been training. We have also been preparing mentally. Now it’s up to the mountain whether it will let us climb it,” she said.

PCG doctor Ted Esguerra, for his part, said he would help the three women be in optimum shape when they make the climb. He said he would even need to regulate or temporarily stop their monthly periods, since loss of blood weakens them and alters their mood.

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Intramuros, Manila

EN BANC

IN RE CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION OR DELISTING OF SECTORAL PARTIES, ORGANIZATIONS OR COALITIONS UNDER THE PARTY-LIST SYSTEM PURSUANT TO COMELEC RESOLUTION NO. 7718	**Abalos**, Benjamin Sr. S. **Borra**, Resurreccion Z. **Tuason**, Florentino Jr. A. **Brawner**, Romeo A. **Sarmiento**, Rene V. **Ferrer**, Nicodemo T.	Chairman Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner

x- -x Promulgated: 12 February 2007

RESOLUTION NO. 7819

xxx xxx xxx

Premises considered, the Commission **RESOLVED**, as it hereby **RESOLVES**, to **DELETE** the following parties from the list of registered sectoral party, organizations or coalitions under the party-list system on the following grounds:

1. **for failure to obtain at least two per centum (2%) of the total votes cast for party-list in 2001 and 2004 elections:**
    1. Mindanao Federation of Small Coconut Farmers Organization, Inc. (MSCFO)
    2. Farmers and Fisherfolks Aggrupation of the Philippines (FFAPI)
    3. Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP)
    4. Gabay ng Manggagawang Pilipino Party (GABAY-OFW)
    5. Kaloob – Ka Isang Loob Para sa Marangal na Paninirahan (KALOOB)
    6. National Federation of Small Coconut Farmers Organization, Inc. (SCFO)
    7. Sandigang Maralita (SM)
    8. Abay Pamilya Foundation, Inc. (ABAYPAMILYA)
2. **for failure to obtain the two per centum (2%) of the total votes cast for party-list 1998, 2001 and 2004 elections:**
    1. Organisasyon ng Manggagawang Mag-aangat sa Republika (OMMAR)
    2. Partido Katutubong Pilipino (KATUTUBO)
    3. Senior/Elderly (Elderly)
    4. Maritime Party (MARITIME)
    5. Federation of Land Reform Farmers of the Philippines (FLRFP)
    6. Democratic Workers Party (DWP)
    7. Tribal Communities Association of the Philippines (TRICAP)
3. **for failure to obtain the two per centum (2%) of the total votes cast for party-list before and after merger:**
    1. Trade Union Congress Party (TUCP)
4. **for failure to obtain the two per centum (2%) of the total votes cast for party-list in the two elections 1998 and 2004 and failure to participate in the 2001 elections:**
    1. Visayas Farmers Party (AGRIFIL)
    2. Sagip-Kapwa Foundation, Inc. (SAGIP-KAPWA)
    3. Visayan Association of the Philippines (BISA)
    4. Pinoy Overseas Party (POP)
    5. Barangay Association for National Advancement and Transparency (BANAT)
5. **for failure to obtain the two per centum (2%) of the total votes cast for party-list in the two elections 1998 and 2001 and failure to participate in the 2004 elections:**
    1. Alyansa Ng May Kapansanan sa Pilipinas (AKAP)
6. **for failure to participate in the 2001 and 2004 elections but participated only in the 1998 elections and without obtaining the two per centum (2%) of the total votes cast for party-list in the said election:**
    1. National Council of Women of the Philippines (NCWP)
    2. Ang Bagong Pilipina Women (ABP-WP)
    3. Alliance of Filipino Workers (AFW)
    4. Solidarity of Liberals, Independents, and Democrats (SOLIDARITY)
    5. All Labor Unity Party (ALU PARTY)
    6. Alyansa ng Mga Batayang Sektor (ABS)
    7. Pag-asa ng Sambayanan (PAG-SAMBA)
    8. Pambansang Diwa ng Manggagawang Pilipino (PDMP)
    9. National Association of Trade Unions (NATU)
    10. Bagong Pilipino Workers
7. **for failure to participate in the 2004 elections and without obtaining the two per centum (2%) of the total votes cast for party-list in the 2001 elections:**
    1. Democratic Alliance (DA)
    (Manifestation in the 2004 elections was filed out of time per Resolution No. 6646 promulgated 28 February 2004).

RESOLVED, moreover, to expunge from the records the Compliance Report of the following:

1. Kapayapaan, A Peaceful Organization for Leadership, Friendship, Service Movement ("K" Party-list);
2. Babae Para sa Kaunlaran (Babae Ka), and
3. Ang Lakas Ng Overseas Contract Workers, Inc. (OCW)

considering that "K" Party-List and Babae Ka filed their petitions for registration only on September 16, 2006 and September 11, 2006, respectively, while Ang Lakas Ng Overseas Contract Workers, Inc. (OCW) was disqualified pursuant to the resolution of the Supreme Court in GR Nos. 147589 and 147613.

RESOLVED, finally, that the following registered parties are **QUALIFIED** to participate in the 2007 elections for party-list upon filing of the required **Manifestation** pursuant to Resolution Nos. 7804 entitled, "RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE FILING OF MANIFESTATION OF INTENT TO PARTICIPATE, AND SUBMISSION OF NAMES OF NOMINEES UNDER THE PARTY-LIST SYSTEM OF REPRESENTATION, IN CONNECTION WITH THE 14 MAY 2007 SYNCHRONIZED NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS", and 7804-A, entitled, "IN THE MATTER OF AMENDING SECTION 3 OF RESOLUTION NO. 7804 AND ANNEX "A" THEREOF", promulgated on 12 January 2007 and 18 January 2007, respectively:

1. **Bayan Muna (Bayan Muna)**
2. **Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives (APEC)**
3. **Akbayan! Citizen's Action Party (AKBAYAN)**
4. **Luzon Farmers Party (BUTIL)**
5. **Citizens Battle Against Corruption (CIBAC)**
6. **Buhay Hayaan Yumabong (BUHAY)**
7. **Anak Mindanao (AMIN)**
8. **Partido ng Manggagawa (PM)**
9. **COCOFED-Philippine Coconut Producers Federation, Inc. (COCOFED)**
10. **Sanlakas (SANLAKAS)**
11. **Abanse!Pinay (Abanse!Pinay)**
12. **Alagad (ALAGAD)**
13. **Gabriela Women's Party (GABRIELA)**
14. **Migrante Sectoral Party of Overseas Filipinos and Their Families (MIGRANTE)**
15. **Samahan ng Mga Mangangalakal Para Sa Ikauunlad ng Lokal Na Ekonomiya (SMILE)**
16. **Assalam Bangsamoro People's Party (ASSALAM)**
17. **Bahandi Sa Kaumahan Ug Kadagatan (BAHANDI)**
18. **Bagong Tao Movement (BTM)**
19. **The True Marcos Loyalist (For God, Country and People) Association of the Philippines, Inc. (Marcos Loyalist)**
20. **Alyansang Bayanihan Ng Magsasaka, Manggagawang Bukid at Mangingisda – Adhikain at Kilusan Ng Ordinaryong Tao (ABA-AKO)**
21. **Kabataan (KABATAAN)**
22. **Ang Laban ng Indiginong Filipino (ALIF)**
23. **Aging Pilipino Organization, Inc. (AGING PINOY)**
24. **Veterans Freedom Party (VFP)**
25. **Ahonbayan (AHONBAYAN)**
26. **Suara Bangsamoro (SUARA)**
27. **Alab Katipunan (AK)**
28. **Alliance of Volunteer Educators (AVE)**
29. **Advocates and Adherents of Social Justice for School Teachers and Allied Workers (AASJS)**
30. **Alyansa Ng Sambayanan Para Sa Pagbabago (ASAP)**
31. **An Waray (AN WARAY)**
32. **Cooperative-Natco Network Party (COOP-NATCCO)**
33. **Bigkis Pinoy Movement (BIGKIS)**
34. **Anak Pawis (ANAKPAWIS)**
35. **Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy (ANAD)**
36. **People's Movement Against Poverty (PMAP)**
37. **Philippine Confederation of Drivers Organization and Alliance of Concerned Transport Operators (PCDO-ACTO)**
38. **Confederation of Grains Retailers Association of the Philippines (GRECON)**
39. **Alyansa ng May Kapansanang Pinoy (AKAPIN)**
40. **Philippine Guardians Brotherhood, Inc. (PGBI)**
41. **Novelty Entrepreneurship and Livelihood for Food, Inc. (NELFFI)**
42. **Seaman's Party Inc. (SPI)**
43. **Aksyon Sambayanan (AKSA); and**
44. **Anak Mahirap Learning Center, Inc. (ANAK MAHIRAP)**

The foregoing disqualified parties, organizations or coalitions are hereby given three (3) days within which to file their respective Opposition or Motion for Reconsideration from publication.

This resolution is without prejudice to new petitions for registration filed by sectoral parties, organizations or coalitions under the party-list system.

Let the Law Department and Clerk of the Commission implement this resolution. The Education and Information Department is authorized to publish an excerpt of this resolution particularly the dispositive portion hereof in two (2) newspapers of general circulation with dispatch.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.
Chairman

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

ROMEO A. BRAWNER
Commissioner

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

cc Chairperson
All Commissioners
Executive Director
Deputy Executive Director for Operations
Law Department
Clerk of the Commission
Education and Information Department

(PDI–February 14, 2007)

Barbers' 'kidnappers' free on bail

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—THE policeman and his cousin, who were accused by Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) general manager Robert Dean Barbers of trying to kidnap him and his family over the weekend, have been released from jail, but were charged with violation of the gun ban and bad behavior.

Initial police investigations did not support Barbers' claim that four car-riding men led by Batangas policeman Jun Virtusio blocked his path and tried to abduct him and his family shortly before noon Saturday along a provincial road in Barangay Manghinao, Bauan while they were on their way to a beach resort.

Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan, commander of the Philippine National Police Region 4-A, said the confrontation on the highway was more likely due to "road rage" that erupted after a traffic altercation.

PO1 Virtusio, assigned at the Cuenca, Batangas police station, was released from the detention center of the Bauan police station late Monday afternoon shortly after he posted P12,000 bail before the court in Batangas City.

Civilian Gerry Mendoza, another suspect in the supposed foiled kidnapping, was just charged with light threats.

Another suspect in the incident, Virtusio's brother Airman 2nd Class Niño Virtusio has been placed under the "administrative custody" of his squadron commander at Philippine Air Force's 710th Special Operations Wing. Another brother, Noel Virtusio, remains at large.

"I personally believe that the statement of GM Barbers (that the armed men tried to abduct him) is highly speculative," Radovan said.

Radovan told reporters at Camp Crame that their investigations showed that Virtusio had called for a "flash alarm" to the Batangas police after he and Barbers first had an altercation on the road.

"Now if you are a scalawag in uniform trying to kidnap somebody, are you going to call up your higher headquarters and ask that a flash alarm be issued so that other police stations can help you catch up with your intended kidnap victim? Definitely not," Radovan stressed.

Two witnesses also came forward and said it was Barbers, who allegedly also carried a gun, who was the aggressor in the road confrontation which apparently started when Barbers tried to overtake Virtusio's car.

Nonetheless, the police chief also said he directed his commanders to "review their personnel on police operations" after cameras caught a half-naked Virtusio confronting Barbers.

"We assure GM Barbers and the public that we do not tolerate any abusive behavior of our personnel. The policeman will face the proper charges. Corrective measures are also being implemented to address any operational lapses," the general said. *With reports from Alcuin Papa and Tarra Quismundo*

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

IN THE MATTER OF AMENDING COMELEC RESOLUTION NO. 7770 ENTITLED: "ENFORCEMENT OF THE PROHIBITION AGAINST APPOINTMENT OR HIRING OF NEW EMPLOYEES; CREATION OR FILLING UP OF NEW POSITIONS; GIVING SALARY INCREASES; TRANSFERRING/DETAILING CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES; AND SUSPENSION OF ELECTIVE LOCAL OFFICIALS IN CONNECTION WITH THE 14 MAY 2007 SYNCHRONIZED NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS".	**ABALOS, SR.**, Benjamin S. **BORRA**, Resurreccion Z. **TUASON, JR.**, Florentino A. **BRAWNER**, Romeo A. **SARMIENTO**, Rene V. **FERRER**, Nicodemo T. **Promulgated: 12 February 2007**	Chairman Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner

x---x

RESOLUTION NO. 7770-A

This pertains to the amendment of Comelec Resolution No. 7770 entitled: "Enforcement of the Prohibition Against Appointment of Hiring of New Employees; Creation or Filling Up of New Positions; Giving Salary Increases; Transferring/Detailing Civil Service Employees; and Suspension of Elective Local Officials in connection with the 14 May 2007 Sychronized National and Local Elections", promulgated 6 December 2006, particularly, Items 2 and 4 of Section 2 thereof.

The pertinent portion of Resolution No. 7770 is quoted hereunder:

"SEC. 2. Request for authority of the Commission; How to file – (a) Requests for authority to make or cause any transfer or detail of any officer or employee in the civil service shall be in writing and filed with the Law Department of the Commission, when:

(1) xxx xxx xxx

(2) It involves Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors or positions of similar rank, Philippine National Police Provincial/District Directors or Commanders, Officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines with the rank of major or equivalent rank, and/or holding positions of battalion commanders or higher; Provincial Treasurers, Schools Division Superintendents, and Assistant Superintendents, irrespective of their official stations;

(3) xxx xxx xxx

(4) It involves employees, irrespective of position and official station, of agencies deputized by the Commission

Xxx xxx xxx."

In order to ensure that the transfer/reassignment of treasurers are not being made to influence the result of the election and to insulate Comelec field officials from political pressure; and, further, more to facilitate the processing of requests for transfer or detail of employees of deputized agencies, the Commission **RESOLVED**, as it hereby **RESOLVES**, to amend Items No. 2 and 4 of Section 2 of Comelec Resolution No. 7770, respectively. Thus, the pertinent portion of Resolution No. 7770 shall now read as:

"SEC. 2. Requests for authority of the Commission; How o file. – (a) Requests for authority to make or cause any transfer or detail of any officer or employee in the civil service shall be in writing and filed with the Law Department of the Commission, when:

(1) xxx xxx xxx

(2) It involves Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors or positions of similar rank, Philippine National Police Provincial/District Directors or Commanders, Officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines with the rank of major or equivalent rank, and/or holding positions of battalion commanders or higher, Provincial Treasurers ***and City/Municipal Treasurers****, Schools Division Superintendents, and Assistant Superintendents, irrespective of their official stations; and*

(3) xxx xxx xxx

Said requests shall indicate; (1) the office and place to which the officer or employee is proposed to be transferred/detailed or otherwise moved; and (2) stating the reasons therefor.

xxx xxx xxx"

This resolution shall take effect on the seventh day after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation.

Let the Education and Information Department cause the publication of this resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation, and furnish copies thereof to all Departments, Constitutional Commissions, Officers, Provincial Governors, City and Municipal Mayors and other government agencies including government-owned or controlled corporation, and all field offices of the Commission.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.
Chairman

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

ROMEO A. BRAWNER
Commissioner

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

(PDI--Feb. 14, 2007)

Both tickets full of 'trapos,' says former UP president

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THEY CLAIM TO BE ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF the political spectrum but looking at their senate slates, there is really no significant difference between the administration and the opposition, former University of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo said yesterday.

"I think both slates are packed with 'trapos' (traditional politicians)," said Nemenzo, who is also the chair of the militant umbrella group Laban ng Masa.

Sought for his assessment of the two slates, Nemenzo, a political science professor, said he was "disgusted" with the candidates being offered to the people.

He made one exception, however: detained Oakwood Mutiny leader Lt. Senior Grade Antonio Trillanes IV, who was included in the opposition slate.

"He is not a 'trapo.' We will possibly endorse Trillanes because he personifies our advocacy of anti-trapo and anti-elite politics," Nemenzo also said.

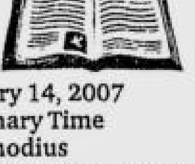
But UP sociology professor Walden Bello, who is one of the leaders of the militant party-list group Akbayan, looks at Trillanes differently.

The leader of the foiled mutiny might have had good intentions, Bello said in a press briefing in San Juan. But he said he would not support "someone who tried to launch a coup, which is a violation of our democratic succession procedures."

"I don't think that should be rewarded," Bello said, referring to the foiled mutiny which Trillanes had led.

Sought for his assessment of the senatorial candidates, Bello, who is expected to be one of the three party-list nominees of Akbayan, said both the administration and the opposition chose personalities not based on "what they stood for" but on their chances of winning and their capability to fund a national campaign.

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Wednesday, February 14, 2007
6th Week in Ordinary Time
Cyril and Methodius

1st Reading:	**Gen 8:6-13, 20-22**
Gospel:	**Mark 8:22-26**

When Jesus and his disciples came to Bethsaida, Jesus was asked to touch a blind man who was brought to him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had put spittle on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked, "Can you see anything?" The man, who was beginning to see, replied, "I see people! They look like trees, but they move around." Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again and the man could see perfectly. His sight was restored and he could see everything clearly.

Then Jesus sent him home saying, "Do not return to the village."

Commentary

After 40 days, a raven is sent out and it returns; then a dove and it also returns; then a dove again, but this time the dove brings back an olive leaf. And the waters recede. God has made peace with his people and recreated the face of the earth (literally). Noah blesses God and gives us the promise that it will not be God who dooms the earth because of our evil, nor will it be God who will strike down all living beings. God will hold the earth in all seasons—that is God's promise.

Jesus is brought a blind man and he takes him aside. He puts spittle on his eyes and lays hands on him. But it takes at least two attempts before the man can see—conversion and living by faith takes time. Piece by piece and then he is restored and can see perfectly—with the light of Christ/baptism. And he is warned not to go near the village—where people can't see. Again the story is speaking about baptism and the catechumenate, then the mystogia. Can we see perfectly? Can we see the world the way God does?

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications) & http://www.claretphilippines.org (Claretian Missionaries in the Philippines)

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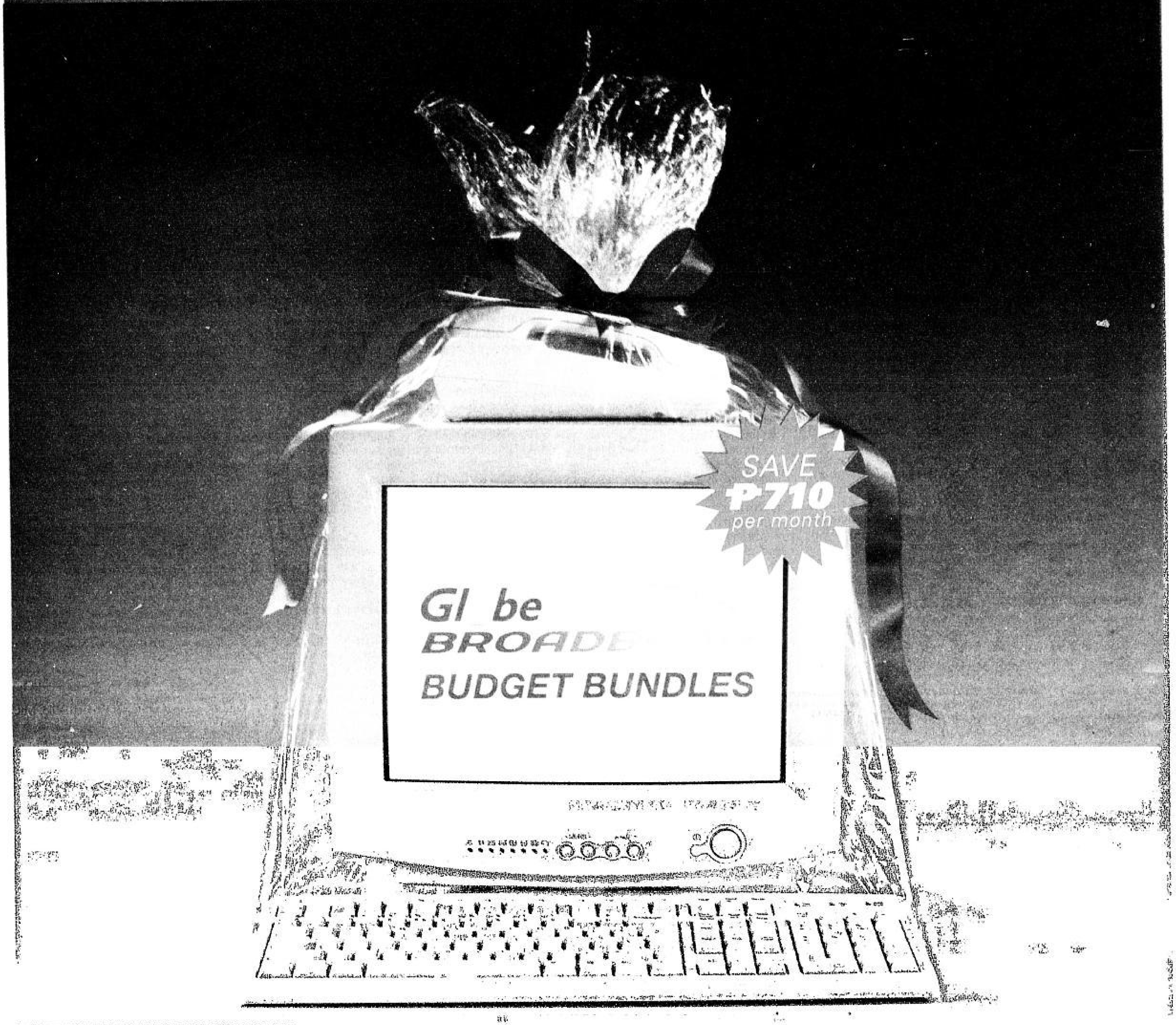

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24 RP seamen released

From page A1

Nigeria for exerting their best to keep our nationals out of harm's way.

"The Almighty has once again come to the succor of our beloved OFWs (overseas Filipino workers), and for this we join their families and the entire nation in a collective prayer of thanksgiving," Bunye said.

2 other Pinoys still captives

Another seven foreign hostages seized by different armed groups are still in captivity in the delta, where violence against expatriates and against the oil industry is on the rise.

The remaining hostages are two Italians, one Lebanese, one American, two Filipinos and one Frenchman.

The kidnappers of the 24 Filipinos said they had seized the Baco-Liner 2 because it was "suspected to have been conveying arms and ammunition imported by top politicians in the country, to destabilize the 2007 general elections in the region."

Nigeria is due to hold elections in April that should mark the first democratic transition from one civilian government to the next in Africa's top oil producer.

The Baco-Liner spokesperson said there were explosives on board the cargo ship but these were destined for oil companies that use them for exploration and had nothing to do with politics.

"We are not engaged in any smuggling whatsoever," said the spokesperson.

Divisions among rebels

The kidnappers said they would take unspecified "further actions" unless Nigerian authorities met a series of demands including the release of two jailed leaders from the delta and the payment of compensation to local villages for oil spills.

The abduction of the 24 Filipinos exposed divisions among rebel groups in the delta.

The kidnappers said they were from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), whose attacks a year ago caused the loss of 500,000 barrels per day in oil output, a fifth of Nigeria's capacity. That production has not been resumed.

But Jomo Gbomo, who had always spoken for MEND since the group emerged in late 2005, had repeatedly denied his group was involved in the abduction. He said a separate group was responsible and MEND did not share that group's objectives.

Activist sources in the region said the group that kidnapped the Filipinos used to have links with Gbomo's MEND about a year ago, but they had a falling out. MEND had sometimes worked with pre-existing militias whose agendas were based on local issues.

Rampant corruption

Poverty, lawlessness and a collapse in public services due to rampant corruption among government officials lie at the root of the problems in the Niger Delta, where the lines are blurred between political militancy and crime.

Most residents of the vast wetlands region live without clean water, electricity, roads or functional clinics and this fuels resentment toward the multibillion-dollar oil industry.

Attacks on oil facilities, kidnappings for ransom, smuggling of stolen oil, armed robberies and assaults on the security forces are all common. Many fear the situation will worsen ahead of April's elections as armed thugs hired by politicians to intimidate their opponents spring into action. *With reports from Reuters, Michael Lim Ubac*

EU, UN need Melo report to help RP probe of killings

From page A1

Commission Senior Officials' Meeting.

Landaburu said the EC was closely following the developments of the inquiry into the political killings and that it was "important" for it to be furnished a copy of the Melo Commission's report.

"We have been requested to support this investigation and our position is of course to be ready. But we want to have more information on the issue," he said.

The commission chaired by retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo recently submitted its report to Ms Arroyo but its contents have yet to be made public.

But Melo had said that retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan and other military commanders should be held accountable for the killings on the basis of command responsibility.

After meeting with Melo, the President directed the commission to continue with its work and also announced that she would seek the EU's help in getting to the bottom of the killings.

UN also conducts inquiry

The EU has repeatedly expressed alarm over, and called on the Philippine government to put a stop to, the murders.

Landaburu said yesterday that based on the Melo Commission's report, the EU member-states would discuss "in which way we can make some progress."

In response, Edcel Custodio, foreign undersecretary for international and economic relations, said a news briefing on the contents of the report would be conducted at the Palace within the week.

Custodio stressed that the EU investigation would be separate from the inquiry being conducted by Philip Alston, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights' special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, although it involved the same issue.

Alston met behind closed doors with Melo and members of the commission for more than an hour yesterday afternoon at the IBP Building in the Ortigas Center.

Relatives of rights abuse victims and members of the Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services (PARRDS) gathered outside the building, hoping to be apprised of the report.

Members of PARRDS, including executive director Belinda Formanes, had managed to meet with Melo an hour before Alston arrived.

Formanes said she had asked Melo for public disclosure of the report and was told that this would depend on Malacañang.

PARRDS is among the few groups that agreed to cooperate with the Melo Commission. Militant groups had snubbed the commission's hearings, saying it would not be able to investigate the killings independently.

In a statement, PARDDS said it had recorded at least two killings this year. It said one of the victims was farmer Joseph Matunding, who was shot dead by two gunmen in Iloilo two weeks ago.

It warned that there were 2,342 persons more who were "at risk of being killed."

'Nothing to hide'

Alston also met yesterday in Camp Crame with Deputy Director General Avelino Razon of the Philippine National Police, who told reporters later that despite continued criticism from militant organizations, the PNP had "nothing to hide" in its own probe into the killings.

Razon heads the PNP's Task Force Usig formed to look into the murders.

At the meeting, Razon turned over the task force's report to Alston and briefed him on its progress.

"We have nothing to hide and we are ready to cooperate with the United Nations so the whole world will know what is really happening," he told reporters.

He also said Alston's team was "surprised" at the PNP's disclosure that two of those earlier reported killed by government forces—Renato Bugtong and Edwin Mascariñas—were actually alive. He said he presented the two men to Alston's team.

"It shows that the list of militant groups [of those killed] is not accurate," Razon told reporters.

He said the case of Bugtong and Mascariñas bolstered suspicions that militant organizations had been "bloating" their figures of alleged victims of political violence.

He also said a large number of those listed by militant groups as victims were actually killed in legitimate encounters with government forces.

According to the tally of the human rights group Karapatan, 832 persons, including leftist activists, have been summarily executed. But Razon said the figure was actually 115.

Razon also said he told Alston that the PNP "supports the objectives of the UN team, and we will extend all the assistance it needs to conduct a fruitful and fair search of the truth."

State accountability

Also yesterday, members of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) picketed the entrance of Camp Crame.

"State responsibility and accountability are what the people and the human rights victims demand. Anything less would be a great injustice" Bayan chair Carol Araullo said in a statement.

She added: "The Armed Forces has been tagged as responsible for many of the killings. The PNP in turn covers up the tracks of the AFP through investigating bodies such as the Task Force Usig. We hope that the UN rapporteur sees through the lies being peddled by government security forces."

Alston is due to make a statement on his findings after his 10-day visit.

He was accompanied to the PNP briefing by Ulrich Garms of the UN Office of the High Commission on Human Rights and William Abresch, director of the Extrajudicial Executions Program of the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice.

The center is attached to the law school of New York University where Alston teaches. Alston himself is codirector of the center.

Also present at the PNP briefing were representatives of the UN Development Program and UN Children's Fund, the DFA, the AFP and the PNP's Internal Affairs Service.

'Good exchange'

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon also met with Alston and his team and presented a detailed report showing that communist rebels had themselves ordered the liquidation of 1,229 persons included their own men, government officials, military and police authorities, and civilians.

Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane presided over the briefing for the UN team.

"We had a good exchange ... [Alston] said it was a briefing that was very appreciated," Esperon told reporters after the meeting.

He also said military and defense officials were able to present to Alston "the workings of human rights in the [AFP]" and to explain that respect for human rights was being "inculcated" in all officers and men.

"We are proud to say we have investigated all of these people who have been implicated, and that one of them has been dismissed," Esperon said.

Asked whether the UN team had asked about Palparan, Defense Undersecretary Ernesto Sarolina said there were certain "questions somehow related" to the official termed by activists as *berdugo* (butcher). *With reports from Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Christine O. Avendaño*

REPORMA SA HUSTISYA, **KAKUSA** ANG PAG-ASA!

IBOTO KAKUSA PARTY-LIST

KApatiran ng mga naKUlong na walang SAla

Ang katiwalian at baluktot na hustisya ay mananatiling iiral kapag ang mamamayan ay magsasawalang kibo at hindi makikialam. Ito ay magiging isang karamdaman na unti-unting ngumangatngat sa ating lipunan at pagkatao. At hindi natin namamalayan na ang sistemang ito ang siyang magbabaon sa ating mga Pilipino tungo sa putikan ng kahirapan at kawalan ng pag-asa.

Sa paghahanap at paghahangad ng lunas sa mga suliranin, ganap na matatagpuan sa ating sarili ang mga paraan upang makaahon at mapuksa ang katiwalian sa baluktot na hustisya. Sa gayon, isang organisasyon, ang **KAKUSA** ang ipinagbuklod upang *tunay na maisulong ang reporma sa sistema ng hustisya, maitaguyod ang kapakanan ng pamilya ng mga nakulong, at lubos na maipatupad ang reporma sa kulungan.* Dito itinanim ang punla ng pagbabago at umusbong ang matatag na puno ng reporma.

Apat na taon ang lumipas, ang **KAKUSA** ay malawak na nag organisa sa iba't ibang probinsya ng Luzon, Visayas at Mindanao upang palaganapin ang kausa ng pagbabago at reporma. Kasama ang iba't ibang sektor, kapit–bisig na itinataguyod ang bagong pag-asa.

Ngayon, ang **KAKUSA** ay buong pwersa at sama-samang naninindigan para:

- **maisulong ang reporma sa sistema ng hustisya,**
- **maitaguyod ang kapakanan ng pamilya ng mga naging biktima, at**
- **lubos na maipatupad ang reporma sa kulungan.**

Inaanyayahan namin ang sambayanang Pilipino na makiisa sa **KAKUSA,** sama-sama nating ipalaganap ang pagbabago at mag-alay ng panibagong pag-asa sa mamamayan. Mabuhay ang Pilipino.

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Advt

Pasig River ferry sails ...

From page A1

stations are located at the Escolta, Santa Ana, Guadalupe, Hulo and Lambingan. The average distance from a jeepney, bus or MRT line is about 300 meters.

The service will please early birds, operating from 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m., as well to allow commuters to catch last-hour rides on the Metro Rail Transit. Total travel time includes a three-minute stop at each station.

Initial routes, with other routes to be announced later, are:

Link / Node Ferry	Travel Time
Escolta - Sta. Ana	20 minutes
Sta. Ana - Guadalupe	15 minutes
Guadalupe - Hulo	13 minutes
Hulo - Lambingan	7 minutes
Lambingan - Sta. Ana	3 minutes

The ferryboat operator will charge a minimum rate of P25 per short route inclusive of the station fee.

For longer routes, the rate will be P35 to P45.

More boats coming

By the end of February, two more boats will come into service, with boats No. 5 and 6 ready by March 31. RFID (radio frequency identification) cards for multiple journeys, similar to an e-pass, are available at ticketing booths to avoid long queues.

Demonstrating that public and private sector partnerships can work, the government has provided the infrastructure: The ferry stations, security and safety of navigation, and the improvement and protection of the environment. The three agencies involved are the Department of Transportation and Communications, the Metro Manila Development Authority, and the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

From the private sector, Nautical Transport Service Inc. built, owns, and will operate the Philippine-made ferryboats. The company has been granted a five-year license by Marina or the Maritime Industrial Authority, to run the service.

Two previous attempts by the private sector to provide ferry transport did not succeed because of the government's failure to provide stipulated passenger terminals.

Private-public partnership

Visually, the situation is expected to improve with the relocation of squatters from both banks of the river who are the main cause of the river's pollution. In their stead, linear parks are being constructed, with several already built and enjoyed by their neighborhoods.

"Scientific tests show that there is life again on the Pasig River. The fish are back, and salinity has improved a lot," says Undersecretary Francisco Bravo of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which is charged with restoring the river.

Chairman of the Pasig River Ferry Project is Agustin Bengzon, who initiated the plan for the ferry service when he was DOTC undersecretary. Although he has since been appointed by Ms Arroyo to the presidency of NDC Maritime Leasing Corp., Bengzon was nevertheless retained by Secretary Leandro Mendoza to continue to head the project and see it to completion.

"The project is a model of a public-private partnership for a mass transport system with no government subsidy. The government provides the infrastructure, and the private sector provides and operates the ferryboats," Bengzon says.

The Metro Manila Development Authority represented by Undersecretary Cesar Lacuna is part of the joint effort coordinating the project in tandem with the DOTC and the PRRC. Also on the team is Unilever's General Manager for Corporate Development Chito Macapagal, representing the private sector. Unilever has long been a keen supporter of a clean Pasig River.

Life vests

In compliance with safety requirements imposed by Marina that life vests provided should number 10 percent more than the maximum passenger capacity, the ferry service operator has provided each vessel with 160 life jackets. A small coffee and snack bar on board will be operated by a concessionaire.

Costs of building the all-weather ferry stations have been sourced from an Asian Development Bank loan with counterpart funds from the Philippine government earmarked for the rehabilitation of the Pasig River and its environs. Amenities include clean toilets, telephone booths, vending machines and a lift for disabled passengers.

Both the ADB and the government will be fully paid back by station fees collected by the ferry service's operator.

4 more stations

When the project is completed later this year, in addition to the 10 terminals stretching from Plaza Mexico at the Pasig River's mouth, there will be four more stations along the Marikina River all the way to Santa Elena.

"The feasibility to replicate the Pasig River Ferry Service in other major river systems in the country such as the Dagupan and Cagayan Rivers, should also be considered and studied," Bengzon says.

This project may well serve as a template for riverine transport, as in days of yore.

In the end, the 'torpe' gets the girl ...

From page A1

It's not the cool dude, the smooth talker, or the smart dresser who rides off into the sunset with the love of his life.

It's the shy and reserved, often wordless and apparently needy type sitting at the next table during a dinner date, according to a social psychology study conducted by Liezl Rillera Astudillo, a professor of the University of the Philippines Baguio.

But the study also found that the perceived Filipino attraction to meek personalities—which sometimes develops into full-blown romance—does not necessarily turn into life-long partnerships.

Astudillo is scheduled to present the study results today at a forum aimed at exploring how Filipino teenagers initiate platonic and romantic relationships.

According to the psychology professor, few modern studies explore how Filipino relationships endure or break up.

Thus, the study was intended to fill up data gaps in popular psychology involving the Filipino consciousness, she said.

Compassion

Shy and quiet types draw more women (or men) compared to those who court their potential partners aggressively or who take pains to make themselves attractive, the study showed.

"[The objects of affection] are drawn to people in need. They want to help, or take care of them. It proves [the stereotype] that compassion dictates Filipinos' actions," Astudillo told the INQUIRER.

She said the beginning of any relationship should explain why romance, marriage and friendship take life-affirming or tragic courses.

She added: "The initiation of interpersonal bonds can offer a starting point for [determining] how close relationships get off the ground.

"Taking into account the effects of self-presentation of one's ... identity, this research was also an attempt to provide an essential reality check [on] individuals who are continuously redefining or preserving their [personal image] and the ways by which they interact with their significant others."

Masks

People play numerous roles in society but interaction with potential partners, lovers or friends requires them to invent additional "masks," Astudillo said.

People are conscious about the way they appear to other individuals because interactions with others are usually accompanied "by considerable risks," she observed.

Most Filipinos do not want to be rejected, so they interact the way "actors manage a stage performance," she said.

What the study establishes, according to Astudillo, is a new way of classifying the strategies Filipinos employ to initiate friendships. It does not provide guaranteed social models for attracting lovers.

Astudillo surveyed 240 students of UP Baguio in 2006 to learn their dating and partnership strategies.

She asked half of the students how they initiated relationships, and the other half, how they responded to these "interpersonal strategies."

Roles

In surveying the students who pursued the relationships, Astudillo made them play the part of the active pursuer, the "appearance manager" who relies on his or her physical appearance to inspire passion, the "ingratiator" or flatterer, the "subtle initiator" who uses indirect signals to draw attention to himself or herself, and the "social exchanger" who offers favors in exchange for attention.

She also designated students to play the roles of the "self-appraiser" who draws on his or her looks to inspire some attention, "the intimacy generator" who "promotes intimacy by posing as a listener," and the self-promoter.

Out of all these "applicable self-presentational strategies" to dating or romancing, most of the "target" students preferred "the supplicator" who "establishes close relations by exerting more effort to seek support, help and advice from their targets," Astudillo said in the study.

"The targets' preference for [the supplicator] may indicate affirmation ... that Filipinos regard helping, and receiving help, as integral components in their social interaction," she said.

The students also responded well to "the subtle initiator," which suggests that Filipinos "tend to use less pronounced ways [such as smiling, greeting or starting conversations] to become acquainted with their targets," she added.

Men as initiators

Astudillo said the study also confirmed certain basic views on Filipino relationships.

"Males are generally the initiators of social interaction," she said. In fact, men are also the most conscious about their looks.

Female "targets," on the other hand, respond to their active pursuers, indicating a Filipino or even Asian gender stereotype that has not yet progressed even in the 21st century.

Astudillo said her "self presentation" models might be helpful parenting tools.

"The groundwork of self-esteem is laid out early in life [and] parents ... primarily set the development and direction of their children's self-esteem ... In a sense, the quality of the way adolescents project themselves to the social sphere is partly a reflection of the manner by which they were brought up," she said.

7 of 10 Filipinos believe 'love is blind'–SWS

From page A1

women with live-in partners (79 percent), with 69 percent saying they had experienced it.

Only 58 percent of men with live-in partners said they believed that love is blind and only 39 percent said they had experienced it.

Live-in partners

The belief that "love is blind" is high across all areas (76 percent in the Visayas, 72 percent in the rest of Luzon, 71 percent in Metro Manila and 60 percent in Mindanao) and across socioeconomic classes (72 percent among members of class D, 65 percent in classes ABC and 68 percent in class E).

Fifty-one percent in the Visayas, 48 percent in Metro Manila, and 45 percent in both the rest of Luzon and Mindanao said that they had either felt or been in a situation where "love is blind."

Similar situation

Slightly more Filipinos in class E (54 percent) have been in a similar situation, compared to those in class D (45 percent) and classes ABC (40 percent).

The survey was conducted from Nov. 24 to 29, 2006, using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, and the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. It had a margin of error of plus-or-minus 3 percentage points.

Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

BELIEF IN AND EXPERIENCE OF "LOVE IS BLIND", BY LOCATION AND CLASS, NOVEMBER 2006

	RP [100%]	NCR [14%]	BAL LUZ [44%]	VIS [20%]	MIN [23%]	ABC [12%]	D [65%]	E [23%]
Yes, I believe	70%	71%	72%	76%	60%	65%	72%	68%
Have experienced	47	48	45	51	45	40	45	54
Have not experienced yet	23	23	27	25	14	25	27	13
No, I don't believe	30	28	28	23	40	35	28	32

NOTE: No answer responses are not shown. Figures used are column percentages.

Q178: Naniniwala po ba kayo sa kasabihang "Bulag ang Pag-ibig" o "Love is Blind"? (NANINIWALA, HINDI NANINIWALA) KUNG OO: Masasabi po ba ninyo na kayo ay nakaramdam na o nalagay na sa ganitong sitwasyon? (OO, HINDI)

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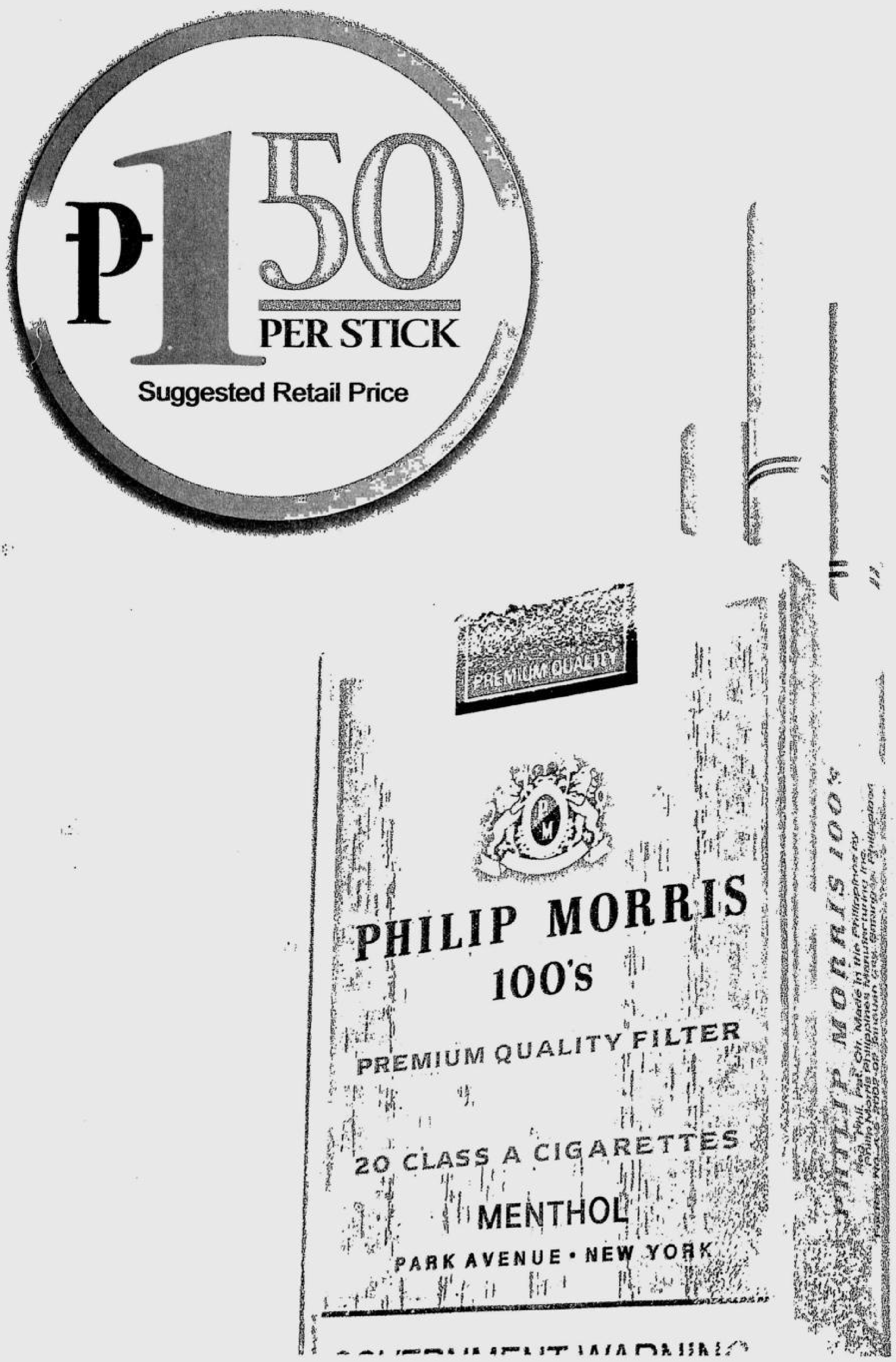

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Lapola Po last man in, promises free 'ukay-ukay'

By Nikko Dizon

THE LAST CANDIDATE TO FILE his certificate of candidacy (COC) on Monday night promised to provide free "*ukay-ukay* relief for all Pinoys."

Manuel Azcuna Po, 70, of Jasaan, Misamis Oriental, beat the deadline for the filing of COCs when he arrived at the Commission on Elections main office at 11:49 p.m.

With Po, there are now a total of 80 senatorial aspirants in the May 14 elections.

The Comelec, however, would still have to finalize the list of senatorial candidates in an en banc session and weed out the so-called "nuisance candidates."

Po identified himself as a businessman and a graduate of the Ateneo de Cagayan (now Xavier University) who goes by the nickname "Lapola Po"—a takeoff from either the fish or the warrior Lapu-Lapu who slaughtered the explorer Ferdinand Magellan in an epic battle on Mactan island in 1521.

He was also a "candidate filer" for senator in the 1995 senatorial elections, for President in the 1998 presidential elections, and again for senator in the 2001 senatorial elections.

Aka 'Fernando Po'

A Comelec employee said she remembered Po as the same candidate who had once identified himself as "Fernando Po" in one of the COCs he filed. It wasn't clear if he was going to make a run for the money against the late Fernando Poe Jr. in the presidential balloting of 2004.

Although most likely to be considered a nuisance candidate, Po was the only one among those who filed their candidacies to attach his "program of government."

Aside from providing free *ukay-ukay* or used clothes to Filipinos, Po said he would also grant "water free for all population," "free light," "land for the landless," "shelter for the homeless," and "capital loan for farmers to achieve abundance food production."

He said he would also have a "strong political well [sic] to immediately and rapidly deliver people basic needs" and would be "inviting our extreme left and extreme right brother hiding in the hill to come down and join hand as Filipino for peace, progress, and prosperity of country."

At noon yesterday, the party-list group Sanlakas staged a rally in front of the Comelec precisely to challenge candidates and their parties to present their platforms to the electorate.

Platform, not form

Sanlakas, which is running for reelection, said in a leaflet that "just like in past elections, this one is also becoming another contest of personalities who are running on the basis of popularity, wealth, and those who control the government machinery."

"*Plataporma, hindi porma!* (Platform, not form)," a handful of Sanlakas members chanted during the rally.

Aside from Po, six others in the list of senatorial aspirants were perennial filers, said Comelec lawyer Josslyn de Mesa, who received the senatorial aspirants' COCs during the filing period.

They were Daniel Ronquillo, a "Pinoy rock singer and composer" who claimed he was nominated by Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos and TV celebrity Boy Abunda; Gherry Guillergan, a "perpetual versatile scientist"; Orlando Abitona, a farmer and public school teacher; Merlito Lagata, a "retired AFP"; Francisco Tahanan, a "Ph.D. in Economics, Consultant, Professor," and Agapito Mendez Jr., a broker.

De Mesa said that Section 69 of the Omnibus Election Code provides that the Comelec "will determine motu proprio, meaning even without a petition, just on the face of the candidate, whether or not that person has a bona fide intention of running for the position."

De Mesa added while the Constitution provides equal opportunity for public service to all citizens, there are still limitations.

"The commission has the sole mandate of administering laws on elections and ensuring an orderly elections, so it has been given ample latitude to come out with rules and regulations that will help the commission come out with an orderly, honest and fair election," De Mesa said.

Escudero kicks off campaign for Senate in cyberspace

By Norman Bordadora

HOUSE MINORITY LEADER Francis Escudero kicked off his campaign for the Senate in cyberspace yesterday.

There was no national television audience to record the event, unlike two attempts to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo last year that the opposition he led botched.

Instead, Escudero engaged 56 chatters—made up of Internet journalists and absentee voters in the United States, the Middle East and Hong Kong—to explain his platform of government—"jobs, education and health."

Asked what he thought of comparisons to his look-alike, Filipino rocker Bamboo, Escudero, who sports a perpetual smirk on his face, said, "It makes me smile."

"To show an innovative, youthful and ingenious way of campaigning given our meager resources," Escudero typed when asked online why he chose to launch his senatorial bid via the Internet.

He was hunched over a computer at his campaign headquarters in Quezon City when he addressed his cyberspace audience.

Yehey.com said the online news conference and campaign chat it hosted for the opposition leader was the first ever in the history of Philippine politics.

"It is a first. Before we had live chats with actors, actresses and other celebrities. This is the first time we did this for a politician running for election," said Elsie So of Yehey.com.

It ran for two hours from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. yesterday and involved 56 chatters. The maximum number of users logged on at the same time to the online exchange was 40.

"It was a success considering that our candidate was not exactly a good typist. He, however, managed to type his answers quickly," a member of his campaign staff told the INQUIRER.

Villar with UNO but he's going 'solo'

From page A1

Pangilinan said he did not talk to anyone in the opposition to be included in the ticket, but he welcomed the endorsement.

Further compounding the confusion about his candidacy was Villar's statement that he was "open" to getting help from the administration although he said that this would look bad because he was with UNO.

Adel Tamano, campaign spokesperson for the opposition's Grand Coalition, said UNO would nevertheless "vigorously" campaign for Villar.

"We will include his name in our materials and we will ask people to vote for him in our sorties," Tamano said.

Villar said he accepted the offer to be part of the UNO slate although he could easily finance his reelection bid (Villar is on Forbes' Top 40 Richest Filipinos list.)

"I know I can do this on my own. But in a campaign, if you have something in common with a team, I say 'grab it' if they want you as a guest candidate. I don't see anything bad about it," he said.

Confusing

Villar was ambiguous on why he chose the opposition rather than the administration ticket.

"There are a lot of reasons (for choosing UNO over Team Unity) but there is no simple answer. But (the elections) are different now than before. It's really confusing these days," said Villar, a part of the Wednesday Group in the Senate.

Two members of the Wednesday Group—Senators Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto—are running under the administration's Team Unity.

"It's a different situation now. Before there was no GMA (President Macapagal-Arroyo)," said Villar referring to the spat between the Senate and Malacañang over the past three years.

Out of fashion

The Senate President said campaigning these days was different from elections past.

"It's more media-oriented now ... unlike previous campaigns where everybody on a ticket went around the country together," he said.

Political rallies are out of fashion because elections have changed dramatically with the advances in electronic media, according to Villar.

"Rallies are very inefficient, most of the people there are bused. I'd rather visit a Jollibee or McDonald's, a mall or public market, and shake people's hands and win more votes," he said.

Villar doused speculation that he joined the opposition to help his bid to run for president three years from now.

"I am not yet thinking about 2010 because there might be no elections then. It could turn out to be parliamentary. So it's hard to plan for 2010. Let's tackle first 2007," he said.

Beliefs converge

Asked why he decided to throw his lot with the opposition whose main patron is deposed President Joseph Estrada, Villar said "we had different principles then," apparently referring to his role in the impeachment of Estrada.

Villar was the Speaker of the House that impeached Estrada on corruption and other charges.

"Now we have the same principles. If our beliefs converge this time, I see no problem why we should not be together now," the Senate President said.

Michael Defensor, senatorial candidate of Team Unity, said the confusion over the status of Villar and Pangilinan would haunt UNO for the rest of the campaign because voters would not take seriously candidates who have no firm standing.

Team Unity campaign manager Reli German said Pangilinan's statement that "he did not apply and that he did not consider joining UNO is a slap on the face of the opposition."

Shallow

German reckoned that coming up with only 10 candidates showed how "shallow" the opposition's ranks were despite claiming to have a "complete lineup."

Until Villar and Pangilinan cleared up their status, German said voters would continue to be confused about where they really stood on issues.

"People will ask where they are getting their resources. Is it from UNO or from their own pockets?" German said.

Violating Comelec rules

Romulo Macalintal, President Arroyo's election lawyer, pointed out that Villar and Pangilinan could run either as UNO candidates or as independents, but not as both because it would violate the rules of the Commission on Elections.

In a text message, Macalintal said: "If Villar and Kiko were merely adopted by UNO, then it (UNO) does not have a complete lineup because there is no such thing as an adopted candidate.

"Villar cannot claim to be independent because he is with the Nacionalista Party while Kiko is with the Liberal Party."

Macalintal said the status of Villar and Pangilinan was crucial considering that it would serve as the basis for the maximum amount they could spend for the senatorial election.

"Independents can spend P5 per voter while party candidates can spend only P3 per voter. Being an independent will also affect their party standing," Macalintal said. ***With reports from Norman Bordadora and Dona Pazzibugan***

When cool charmer meets Pacman's deadly embrace

From page A1

Custodio, a vocal critic of President Macapagal-Arroyo, acknowledged that the 28-year-old boxing icon was "well loved and very popular."

Fair game

But it would be a different story when they actually lock horns in a local election, she said.

"In local elections, it's fair game (*tabla-tabla*)," she said in Filipino. "You need to be closer to the people. You have to be in touch with the grass roots."

Without commenting on Pacquiao's fitness for legislative work, Custodio appeared confident of her chances against Pacquiao.

"I've already established who I am and what I stand for in terms of my legislative work," Custodio said.

She noted that her platform consistently covered education, women's and children's rights, and the delivery of basic services to constituents.

Pacquiao earlier said he would focus on providing education, jobs, and cheap medicines for his constituents should he win.

"Every Filipino has the right to present himself as a candidate to the people," the incumbent lawmaker said. "But at the end of the day, it will be the people who will choose their leaders."

Unsolicited advice

On Monday, Pacquiao got unsolicited advice from outgoing Rep. Francis Escudero and Fr. Sid Marinay, vice chancellor of the Archdiocese of Manila.

Marinay lamented the possibility of Pacquiao's "self-destruction" with his decision to enter the political arena.

He said it was common among people "uprooted from their natural environment and brought to a place they're not familiar with."

That which unites Pinoys

"What comes is an alienation of the self, misery," he told the INQUIRER Monday night. "Celebrity status carries a big responsibility. To handle this responsibility, there has to be character."

Escudero, who's running for senator under the United Opposition ticket, said Pacquiao's decision to join politics would "take away the very few things that unite us."

"Whenever he fights, Filipinos—either from the administration or opposition, Left or Right, men or women, young or old—are all for Manny Pacquiao," he said. "But how come those people convincing him to run will still take this point of unity away from us?"

Chiz to Joker: You abandoned rule of law

From page A1

Escudero, a Bicolano like Arroyo, was reacting to a statement of Arroyo and Recto that the opposition wanted to put up a new government outside the framework of the Constitution.

Escudero led two bungled opposition attempts in the House to impeach Ms Arroyo last year.

"We followed the impeachment process. We gave speeches in Congress. We had peaceful mass actions in the streets. As a former civil libertarian, he should know that it's not a form of destabilization but a right," said Escudero.

"What's illegal with what we did?" he added.

Another senatorial candidate of the opposition, Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, also reacted to the Arroyo-Recto statement that the opposition had nothing to offer the country other than the failed efforts to impeach Ms Arroyo.

'Issue is good governance'

"It is deceiving to say that the opposition has nothing to offer more than the impeachment. As it was during the time when we were still together in the impeachment of (Estrada), the issue is good governance," Cayetano said.

"Whatever platform you have, no matter how good it is, if your government is corrupt and your President is accused of cheating, lying and stealing, it's useless," he added.

The opposition is scrambling to fill the House with enough anti-Arroyo congressmen to secure 79 votes that will automatically transmit an impeachment complaint the minority plans to pursue in the new Congress.

"The economy is improving not because of Mrs. Arroyo but in spite of Mrs. Arroyo. Any government can attain the economic improvements," Cayetano said.

The House committee on ethics recently recommended Cayetano be suspended after he failed to prove his allegations that the First Family had accounts in a German bank.

Administration congressmen expectedly lauded their colleagues in the House for seeing through the opposition's alleged motives.

The 'harsh truth'

"The forthright assessment of Recto and Arroyo made it clearer now why former opposition stalwarts like Sen. Edgardo Angara and former Senators Vicente Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta have left UNO," said Cebu City Rep. Antonio Cuenco.

"The truth hurts. The people should not be misled by the opposition's Grand Coalition because it is a grand conspiracy to fortify Erap's political clout and not a coalition for the country's progress," he added.

Bulacan Rep. Lorna Silverio said the opposition's lack of an agenda was the reason it had difficulty in filling up its slate and had to resort to adopting Senate President Manuel Villar and Sen. Francis Pangilinan.

"Senators Recto and Arroyo just told the harsh truth that the opposition's only motivation is to oust the President. It's not surprising why its members are leaving UNO and joining the administration which has a clear platform of good governance and national development," she added.

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SUBJECT TO BANK APPROVAL

Local execs bullish as Lafayette mine restarts

VARIOUS LEADERS OF ALBAY AND SORSOGON have expressed gratitude to Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Angelo Reyes for allowing Lafayette's Rapu Rapu polymetallic project to reopen last week, saying they expect hundreds of jobs and new business opportunities to be generated by the resumption of operations of the controversial mine.

Reyes had given Lafayette the go-signal to restart after the project had fully complied with all the conditions, most of them meant to protect the environment, the government had imposed.

In separate letters Albay Rep. Carlos Imperial, Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzalez, Sorsogon Gov. Raul Lee and Sorsogon City Mayor Sally Lee said the region badly needs this growth catalyst after being battered by three successive strong typhoons late last year, a Lafayette statement said.

But not everyone in the region is happy with the decision. Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes, head of the presidential fact-finding commission that recommended the closure of the mine, slammed the decision to reopen the project, saying "they just don't get it."

Trial run

Bastes, who had opposed the mine's operations from the start, was appointed head of the commission to recommend action on the Rapu-rapu mine. But its recommendation to close the mine was rejected by Malacañang.

Instead, Lafayette allowed to go on a trial operation to test its safety measures. After a couple of months of tests, during which the mine was hit by three successive typhoons, Lafayette was allowed to reopen.

The local officials said they would continue to be vigilant to make sure the company, the region's biggest investor, practices responsible mining which Imperial said is "the balance between business and environmental interests."

"Thousands of people are hungry and lack decent housing and basic education...We can give them a better life if only we could truly undertake and promote responsible mining," he said.

Gonzalez said the restart "shall assure the employment of 1,000 workers and employees, generate much needed revenues for the local and national government" and position Albay as an investment destination.

Governor Lee said his constituents are now aware of responsible mining and its potential benefits to the community, pledged the continuing vigilance of his government, and asked the church and other NGOs to help in this effort especially since the company, under its new all-Filipino management headed by Carlos G. Dominguez, has consistently been transparent and accessible.

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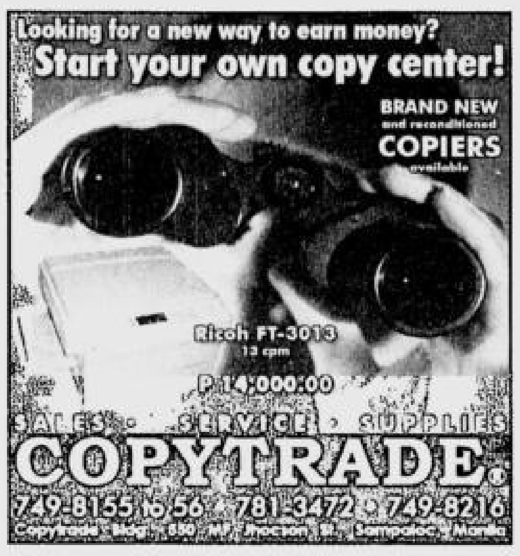
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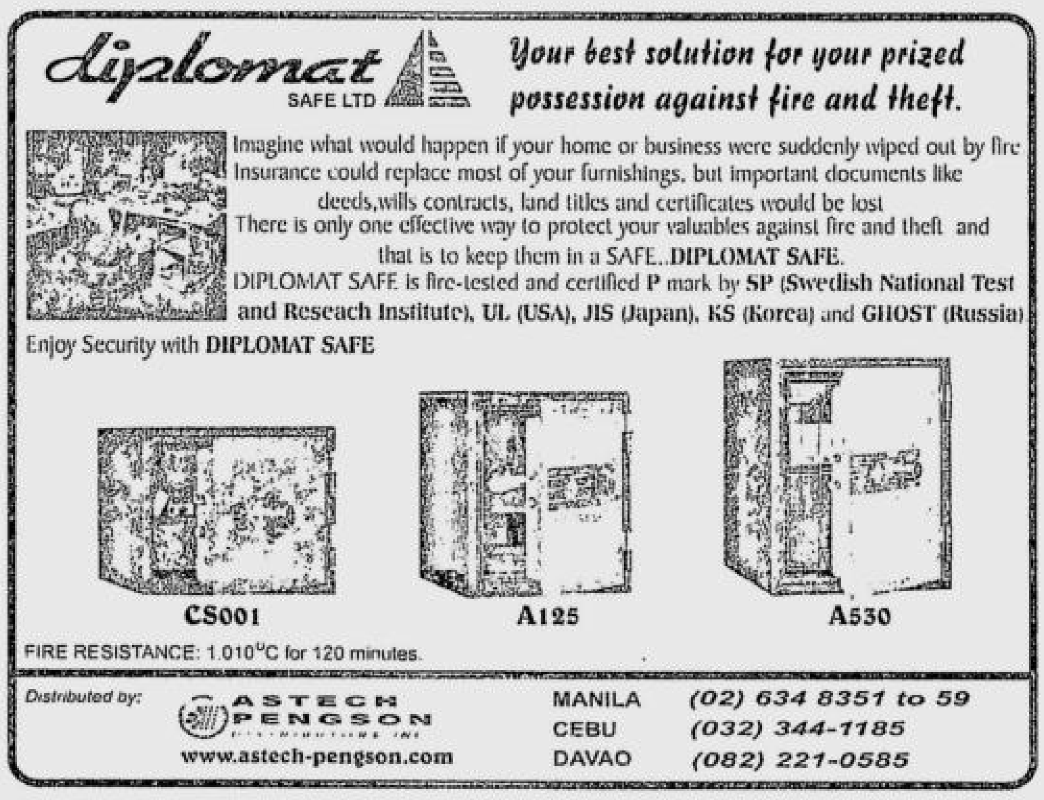
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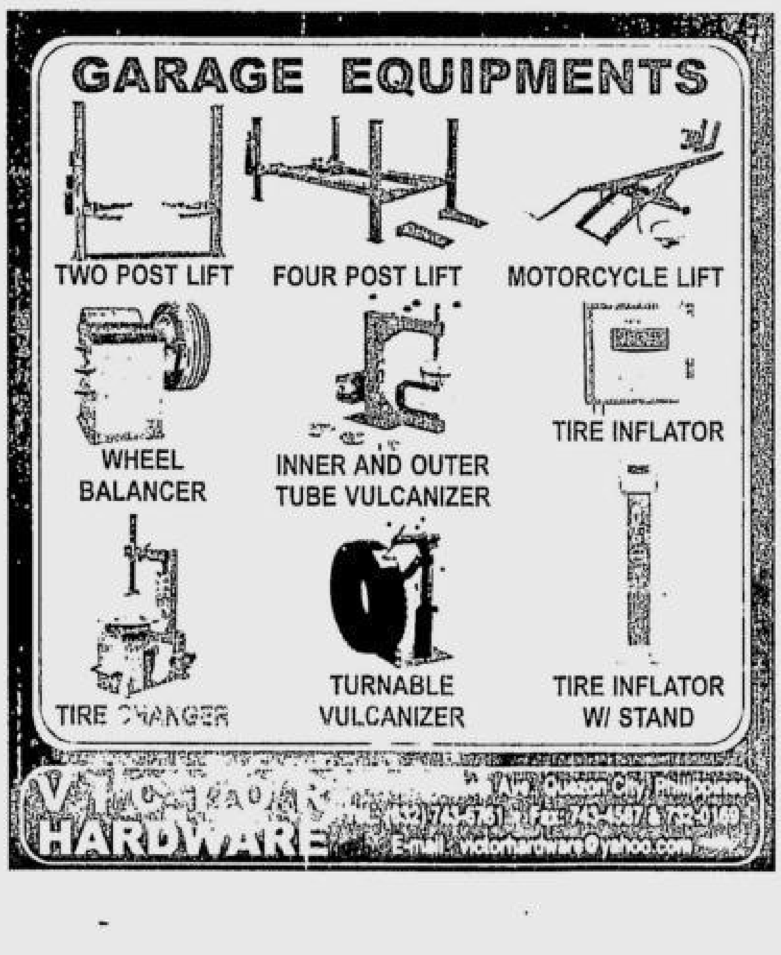
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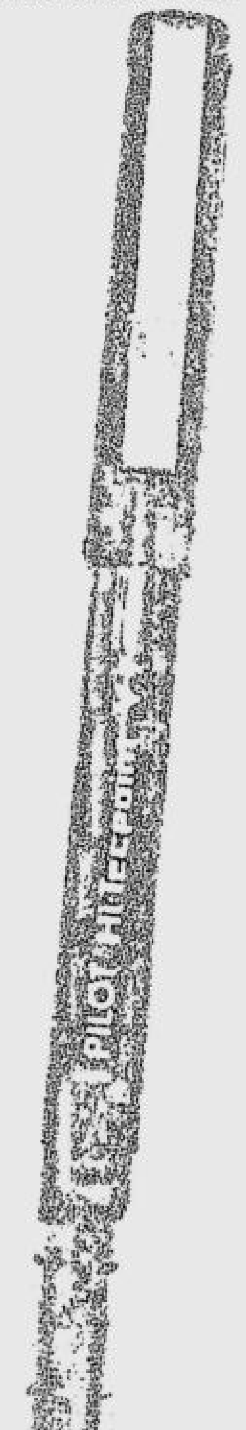
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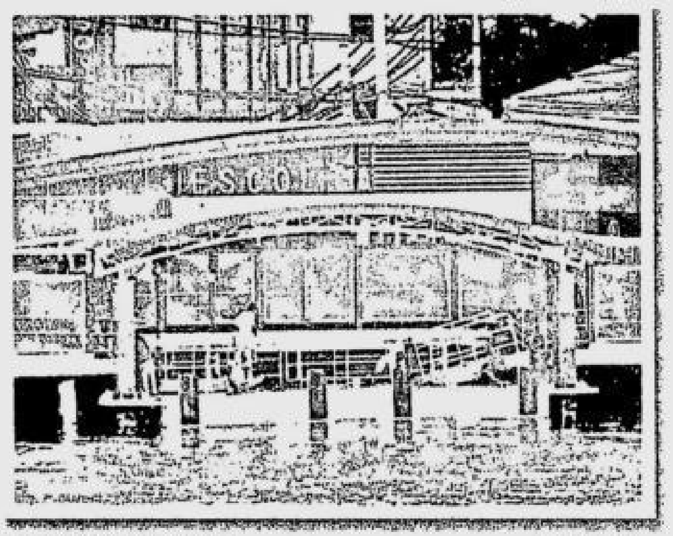
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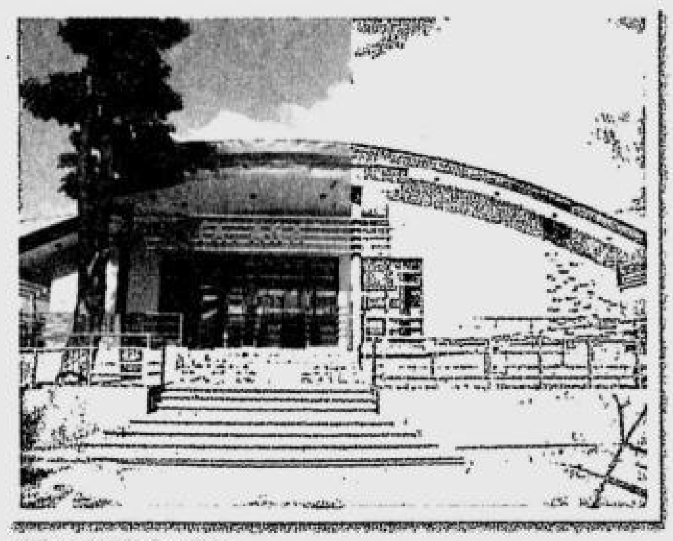
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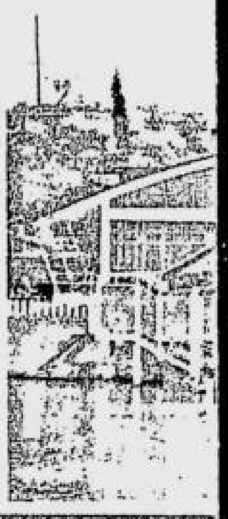
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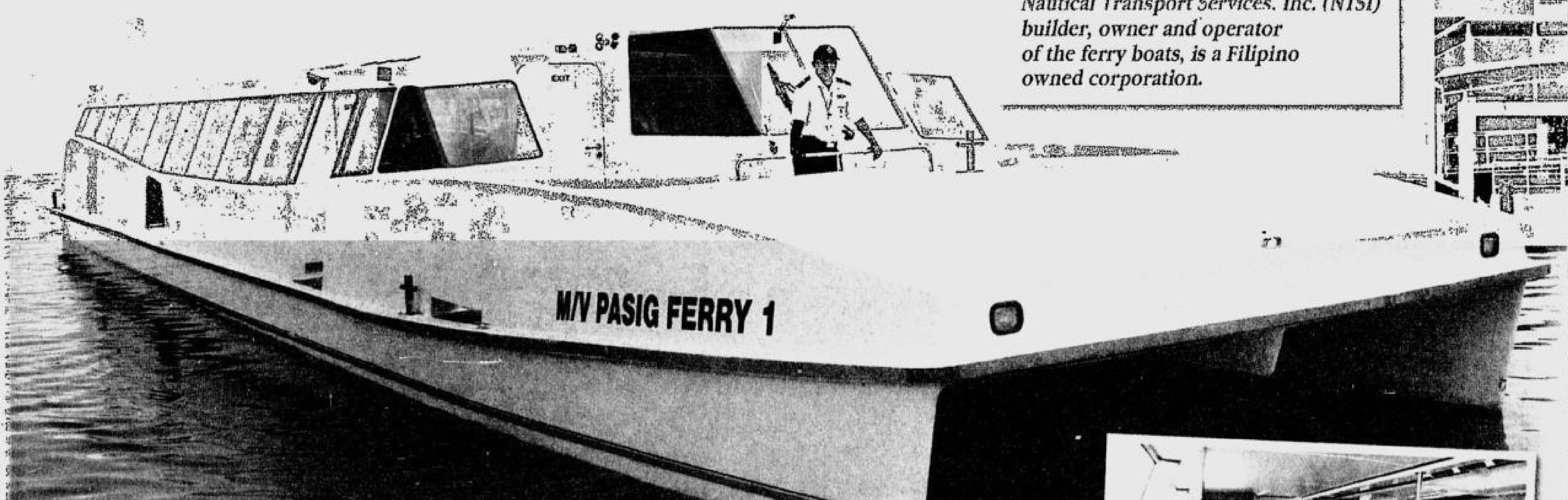
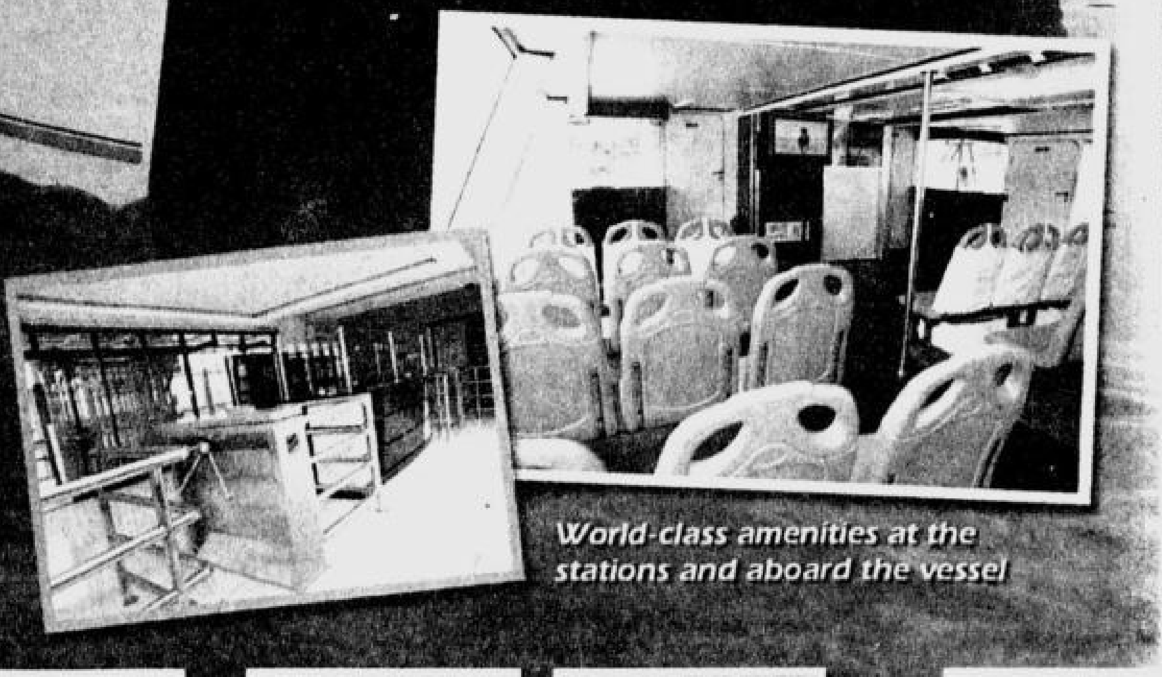


On-going construction of other ferry stations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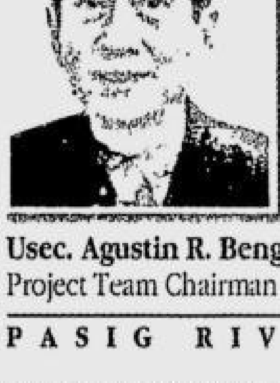
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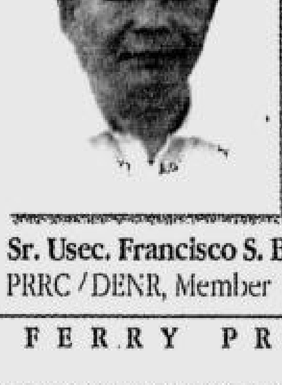
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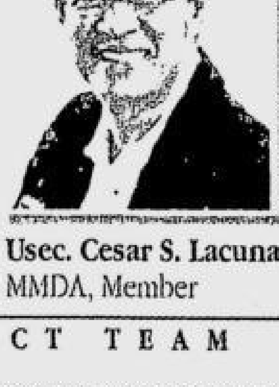
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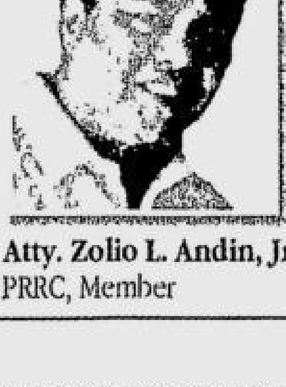
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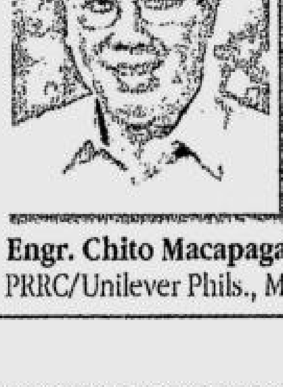
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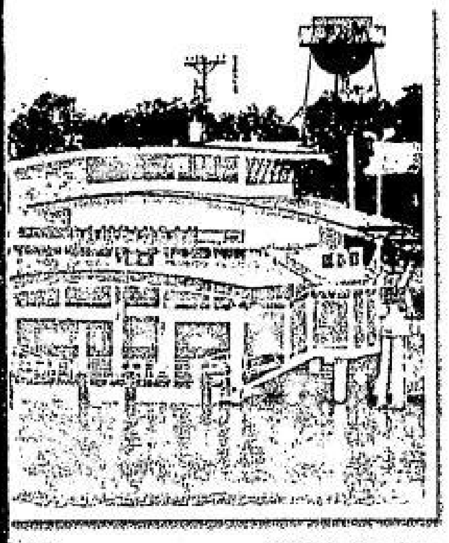

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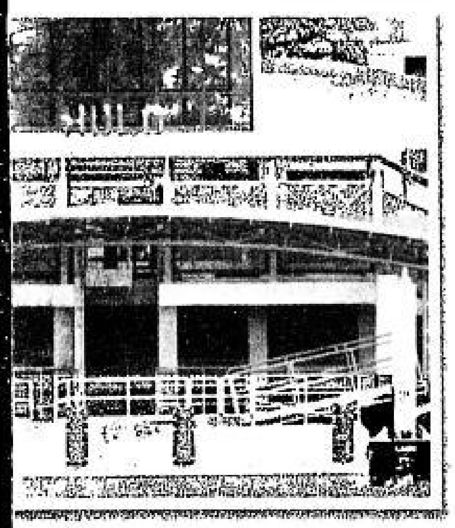

With rates competitive to land transport, the *Pasig River Ferry Service* will ply the stretch of Pasig River, passing through 6 key cities in Metro Manila, namely: Manila, Mandaluyong, Makati, Taguig, and Pasig, and eventually, extend to Marikina. It will initially call on 5 stations *(Escolta, Sta. Ana, Guadalupe, Lambingan, and Hulo)* and another five by the second quarter this year.

Indeed, the *Pasig River Ferry Service* promises a convenient, comfortable ride!

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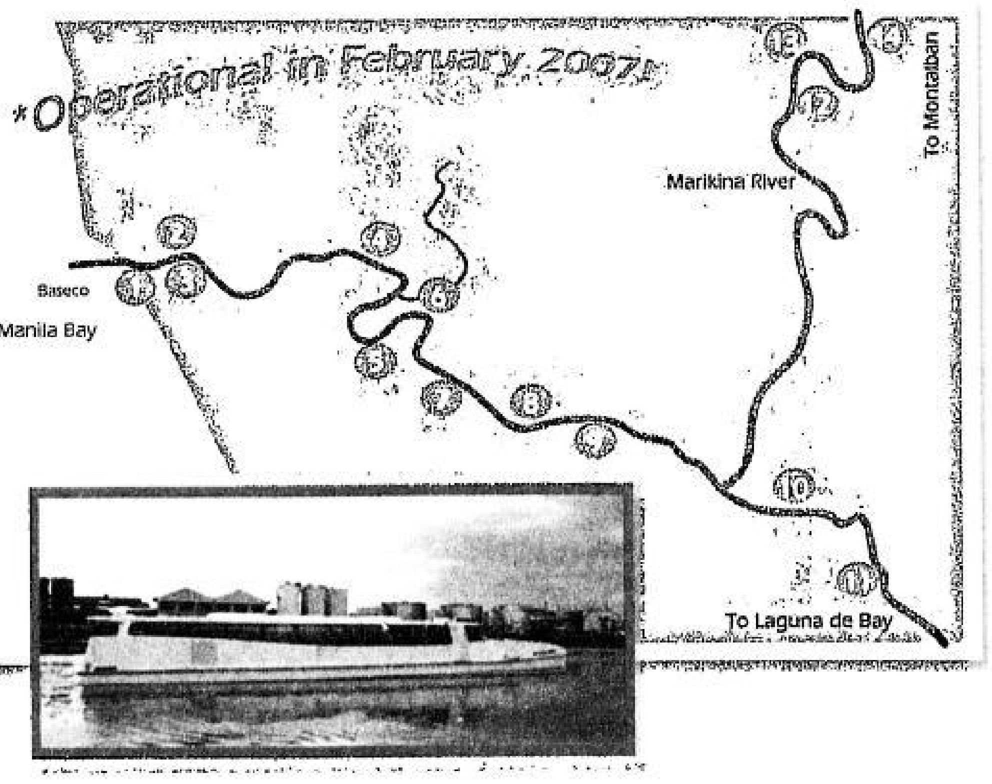

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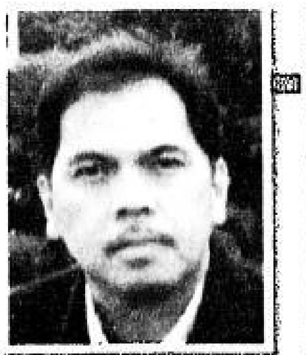
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The *Pasig River Ferry Service* is one of my administration's priority transportation projects for Metro Manila. The revival of the Pasig River as a major artery—a viable alternative for decongesting the roads of the city—can only mean progress for the Filipino people. Pasig River will now play an important role in the country's economy by bringing about an increase in commercial activity with the facilitation in the transport of people and goods in the metropolis.

To the people and institutions behind this project—the *Department of Transportation & Communications, Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission* and *Metro Manila Development Authority*: Congratulations on this milestone. Keep up the good work.

Mabuhay!

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
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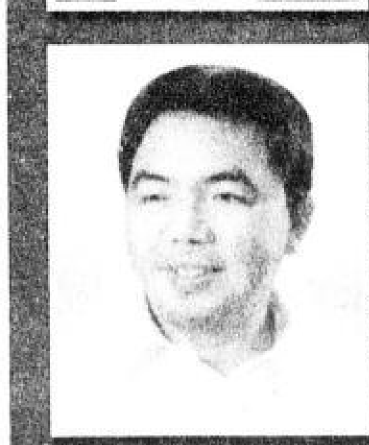

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EDITORIAL

IT WASN'T A GOOD SIGN FOR THE ARROYO administration that its Senate slate was completed in a photo finish. It did itself—and the voters—an injustice by focusing on retail politics (the local races and faction-refereeing). The Palace tag line of "TEAM Unity" cannot dispel the impression that it ended up scraping the bottom of the barrel.

One of the most wounding of accusations leveled at President Macapagal-Arroyo is that she seems incapable of going beyond viewing politics purely in transactional terms. The approach may produce short-term political solutions, but it makes what this nation craves—which is more, not less, statesmanship—even harder to achieve.

Take the presence of three governors in the administration lineup. This is an idea that is long overdue, but which has been wasted by the manner of its execution. For example, Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson touts the support of some fellow governors, including by Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez. But that only made some observers snicker that this is merely another version of the Pampanga showdown, which has seen the President siding with alleged *jueteng* lord Bong Pineda against her erstwhile allies, the Lapids. At the same time, Singson counts on the support of of the so-called "People's Champion," boxer Manny Pacquiao, who is an administration candidate for the House of Representatives. But what does that make of the howl raised by the President's partisans that putting actor Richard Gomez in the administration ticket would be an insult to them and the electorate?

Or take Leyte Gov. Jericho Petilla, who was given a slot in the senatorial slate not for his potential contributions to law-making but as a political accommodation. As the INQUIRER paper reported yesterday, Petilla's inclusion in the administration's Senate slate allows his mother Remedios to try to regain the governorship, and leaves Martin Romualdez free to run for congressman in Leyte's first district with no serious opponent.

Zambales Gov. Magsaysay has built magnificent roads in his province, but he was selected apparently more for name recall than as a representative of a new kind of modern and visionary local governance.

There are other governors on both sides of the political fence, with much brighter potentials for doing justice to the office of senator. But the opportunity to tap such talents has been wasted.

When Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. rebuffed the administration's efforts to recruit him, he reportedly said, "The only thing the administration has to offer is that its candidates won't be cheated." It's hard to be more blunt about it. That was a fresh take on the late Sen. Benigno Aquino's joke about a Japanese politician's reaction to a Filipino politician's protestations about serving the country: "So, you rob the Firipinos!"

The result is that in the twilight of his career, Sen. Joker Arroyo is reduced to doing all sorts of intellectual contortions to justify his embracing the Palace's offer of logistics. The opposition, he sniffed, is not about alternatives, it's only about booting out Ms Arroyo. An experienced oppositionist himself, he is reduced to stating the obvious as if it were not only bad, but unreasonable. As if the unsettled issue about the legitimacy of Ms Arroyo's claim to the presidency is itself illegitimate. As if crisis after crisis hasn't been born of the Palace's obstinate refusal to accept any legal mechanism to hold her accountable for what the Hello Garci tape contains.

Embracing candidates who engage in evasions or say they continue to have moral reservations about her leadership isn't the worst of it. It's the need for the President to scrape the bottom even of the opposition's barrel, which only shows her continuing insecurity over her position. Not even her most loyal lieutenants seemed willing to risk subjecting themselves to public scrutiny by running as administration candidates. Only Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor and Representatives Miguel Zubiri and Prospero Pichay have risen to the challenge. If the administration has achieved so much, why was there no mad scramble to get into its lineup?

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It's the season of the 'balimbing' again

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IT'S ALMOST SUMMER AGAIN AND FRUITS are in season. And no fruit is more plentiful these days than the *balimbing*, that yellow-green, juicy, 10-sided fruit that, which when cut crosswise looks like a star, one more proof that appearance can be deceiving. For while the *balimbing* may look like the stars in the heavens, it really stands for the worst in human frailties: the lack of *delicadeza* in changing loyalties to benefit oneself.

And who is the human who possess such a toughened hide? Only the politician, which must be one of the pests that escaped to badger the humans when Pandora's box was opened. The *balimbing*, poor fruit, symbolizes the *doblecara* of the politician's face.

Yes, it is election time again and human *balimbings* are plentiful. You can't find them in the wet markets or the grocery shelves. But you will find plenty of them in the senatorial slates of both the administration and the opposition. They go by the names of Tito, Tessie, Ralph, Joker, Kiko, Manny, John and Ping. Politicians who were the leading lights in the illegal ouster of President Erap are now running in the opposition ticket. And politicians who were Erap's staunch defenders are now running in the administration ticket. *Ang gulo, ano po?*

Each of them has a good excuse—explained in full-page newspaper advertisements and press statements—for behaving like Mexican jumping beans and political butterflies. But who are they kidding? The people are no fools. They know the politicians are pulling their collective leg once more as they have done so often in the past.

How do you solve a problem like human *balimbings*? Simple: Don't vote for them. If you vote for them, they will keep on fooling you. It is time we put a stop to this insult on our intelligence. Let's put them where they belong—in the *kangkungan*.

* * *

The Department of Foreign Affairs has a Valentine's Day message to Lauro Baja, Permanent Philippine Representative to the United Nations: come home.

Baja was given until today to vacate his post at the UN. Traditionally, ambassadors are given 60 days to make a round of goodbyes in the diplomatic community, to relocate, or to go back to the home office. But Baja is being denied that. The reason: his replacement is in a hurry to assume his position lest he be rejected by the Commission on Appointments.

Who is this eager-beaver diplomat who can't wait for the usual process to be completed? Why, none other than retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. Why is he in such a hurry? Doesn't he have a job so that he has to grab somebody else's job? Is he starving and needs an income? Is he urgently needed in the new position?

None of the above. He just has an ambitious and selfish streak.

Retired Supreme Court chief justices are amply rewarded. They can live comfortably on their retirement pay for the rest of their lives. The retirement system for public officials was planned not only to allow the aging officials to rest and enjoy what remains of their lives, but also to allow the younger officials to move up, to create room at the top, so to speak. But if these retired officials are allowed to stay on by being appointed to other top positions, they effectively block the rise of junior officials. That's selfishness, isn't it?

What more does a retired chief justice need? He has the reputation, the respect of the people, ample retirement pay—and he deserves to rest. He shouldn't deprive others of the blessings that he got.

By the same token, there should be a law preventing retired justices from acting as counsels in litigation. These justices, although retired, still have influence over the lower courts because of their reputations. That puts the litigants on the other side at an unfair disadvantage.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the plunder trial of former President Joseph Estrada. One of his counsels is retired Chief Justice Andres Narvasa. Narvasa doesn't say anything during the trial. He just sits on the bench reserved for the defense. But nobody can deny that by his mere presence there, he exerts an undue influence on the Sandiganbayan justices. Isn't this unfair?

But back to Baja and Davide. There is a widespread clamor in the diplomatic corps and in the Philippine bureaucracy to let Baja stay a little longer at the UN. There are very good reasons for such a clamor. The INQUIRER editorial of Feb. 6 says it very clearly:

"Baja was recently elected vice president of the UN Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc), one of the principal organs of the world body. The Philippines topped the election for 18 new members of the 54-member council. The Ecosoc victory marks the first time that the Philippines emerged No. 1 in an election to a major organ of the UN. It follows a similar impressive win three years ago when the Philippines was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Baja also engineered the election of the Philippines to the Human Rights Council in 2005. With Baja as vice president of the Ecosoc, he is now in line to become president when Asia's turn comes [two years hence], the first Filipino diplomat since the late Carlos P. Romulo in the 1950s and the late Salvador P. Lopez in the 1960s to be so honored."

Why can't Davide be as statesmanlike as former Vice President Teofisto Guingona? Meeting opposition at the Commission on Appointments on his nomination as ambassador to China, Guingona voluntarily asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to withdraw his nomination.

Love conquers all

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I REMEMBER AGAIN THE VIOLENT REACTION of a sector of the Catholic Church and various religious groups last year over Dan Brown's "The Da Vinci Code." Some even took it upon themselves to try to block the showing of the movie version here as though it were the breath of hell itself.

From hindsight, of course, it was all a tempest in a teacup. Neither the book nor the movie subverted this impregnable Catholic country's religious beliefs—such as you can call much of what this country religiously believes in Catholic, or even Christian. Though that probably owes far less to the forcefulness of the heretical challenge than to the fact that most Filipinos do not read (hence the fate of the book) and most Filipinos do not like Hollywood fare that demands some degree of concentration (hence the fate of the movie).

I remember saying at the time that I couldn't understand what the fuss was about because the Church had met graver challenges and remained standing. One of its greatest challenges in fact is what we celebrate today, Valentine's Day. That is love. Or secular love. Or the love between a man and a woman ("brokeback" relationships remain anathema to the Church to this day).

That may seem the most astonishing thing today, but less than a millennium ago, the idea that falling in love was the most miraculous thing on earth wasn't just batty, it was subversive. Preaching, or worse living, it didn't get you immortalized in song, it got you burned at the stake. At least throughout Christendom, which was what Western civilization was then.

The magic of secular love is not a Christian invention, it is a pagan one. It came from the pre-Christian religious beliefs that managed to survive Christian persecution (the Holy Inquisition stretched only bodies, not the imagination) and the cultural influences of the "infidels" who had a far more sophisticated civilization in the East. The origin of the word "troubadour," the itinerant singer of love songs, is in fact Arabic. It comes from "*ta ra b*," which means song or music, combined with the Spanish suffix "*ador*" which is doer of things (as in "conquistador," "matador").

Joseph Campbell, the renowned authority on myths, tells us why this was so in his book "Creative Mythology: The Masks of God." The Christian belief, or myth, of the Fall says that the world is corrupt and corruptible. That being so and humankind being born into sin, things that are natural are to be distrusted. Salvation lies in supernatural intervention, which is the exclusive province of the Church.

There was no separation between Church and State then and religion carried with it the very literal power of life and death over people. How deeply this was ingrained in the culture of Christendom you see in the church-building mania that erupted then. Between 1170 and 1270 alone, France built 80 cathedrals and 500 churches of cathedral class, which by today's estimates are worth $10 billion.

As love went, the Christian imagination turned to the Virgin Mary. Love did not mean secular love, it meant religious ecstasy, devotion to the Virgin Mary and (for women) following her example as the path to salvation. The other side of the coin was the threat of hellfire for those who dared to give in to natural desires or the cravings of the flesh. To say that in this context the average Christian spent his life preparing for the afterlife rather than living this one, the afterlife being the real life and this one transient, illusory and sinful, is no exaggeration.

One can imagine how the love stories that burst into that scene were dangerous, iconoclastic and heretical in the extreme. Such a one is "Tristan and Isolde," immortalized by the poet Gottfried. There was a movie last year about it, but it was universally panned by the critics. Better just read it.

There are various versions of that 12th-century story, but the general drift goes: For various acts of heroism, Tristan is given the honor of fetching Isolde from Ireland to marry his uncle King Mark. On the way home, they accidentally drink a love potion, made by Isolde's mother for her and her husband-to-be, and they fall madly in love. Isolde marries King Mark but continues to tryst with Tristan. The love potion they drank, however, has an expiry date of three years, and so after it wears off, they are compelled to face up to whether they really love each other or not. Meanwhile, King Mark, though a kindly monarch, is consumed by rage and plots to ensnare the treacherous lovers.

That is where the versions vary. Most say the lovers' discovery of the potion is really immaterial since they loved the moment they set eyes on each other. They both defy their king, their kin and their world and flee to pursue their happiness. They do not exactly sing, "There's a place for us," but you might as well imagine them doing so. Some versions say King Mark's legions catch up with the pair, and Tristan dies in battle. Other versions say he escapes and they live happily ever after, such as that is possible in life.

The story sounds familiar? But, of course. That is the Arthurian legend, after the pagan legend was Christianized, Christendom eventually absorbing secular love into its pores with the appropriate theology, and turning the cast of characters into Christian knights determined to live up to the highest ideals of honor and Christian virtue.

Every time I hear that phrase, "Love conquers all," I think of Tristan and Isolde. It's not only because their love for each other conquered all the conventions of their time and place, it's also because their story in itself conquered all the proscriptions of its time and place.

Love does conquer all—even hellfire.

A first look at the senatorial lineups

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

NOW THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE opposition have announced their complete senatorial lineups for the May election, the latest alignment map has changed its contours, but it is also crisscrossed with fissures. And the lineups have dropped their previews identification banners.

The old titles had identified them as "united" coalitions, but neither side was united. To differentiate itself from the administration ticket, the opposition has dropped the United Opposition (UNO) standard, and now calls itself the Grand Coalition. The administration ticket calls itself TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) Unity.

Whatever their names, the composition of the tickets may now be assessed according to the constituencies which the candidates represent as their political base and from which they have been recruited. It is not useful at this stage to examine the relative weights of the tickets from recent opinion surveys showing their popularity ratings, as an indication of their electability. Both tickets have recruited mainly from the veteran political sector. The Senate, as a political constituency, is over-represented in both tickets.

The opposition ticket includes three incumbent senators—Senate President Manuel Villar, Majority Leader (now a misnomer) Francis Pangilinan, Panfilo Lacson—and three ex-senators, Loren Legarda, John Osmeña and Anna Dominique Coseteng. That makes six from the Senate, half of the lineup.

The opposition also recruited three from the House of Representatives: Representatives Alan Peter Cayetano (Pateros-Taguig), Francis Escudero (Sorsogon) and Benigno Aquino III (Tarlac). And outside the legislative field, the opposition recruited Aquilino Pimentel III, son of Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr.; Sonia Roco, widow of the late Sen. Raul Roco; and Oakwood mutiny leader, Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV.

The incumbent and the former senators have proven vote-drawing records and, together with the House veterans, they have name recall. They form the cutting edge of the opposition campaign. Pimentel and Aquino, son of the late Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., represent the carry-over of the dynastic political tradition.

The opposition believes the sympathy vote for Roco would flow on to his widow. This is a sentimental assumption.

Trillanes is a new face, although public recall is based on his theatrical performance in the failed Oakwood mutiny, and his inclusion in the ticket apparently seeks to tap the constituency of revolt that sent cashiered (and failed coup leader) Gregorio Honasan to the Senate.

The Senate is as heavily represented in the administration ticket as in the opposition camp. The Unity Team is fielding three heavyweights—Senators Edgardo Angara, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto—as well as two ex-senators, Vicente Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta. Arroyo, who led the prosecution panel in the impeachment trial, and Angara, Oreta and Sotto represent opposite sides in the impeachment of President Joseph Estrada. This combination is emblematic of the rainbow character of the Unity Team and raises questions about its cohesion. Oreta and Sotto were formerly with the opposition lineup, but bolted to join the Nationalist People's Coalition, a formal ally of the majority Lakas party. Even though they had left Angara's LDP, the three have virtually closed ranks behind the TEAM campaign.

From this view, the tickets look pretty even.

The administration lineup recruited veteran Rep. Prospero Pichay (Surigao del Sur), a die-hard Arroyo ally, and Rep. Miguel Zubiri (Bukidnon), both Lakas members. But TEAM Unity has broadened the base of representation in its ticket than the opposition, beyond the ranks of congressional veterans. It has drafted Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson of Ilocos Sur, whose exposé on the *jueteng* pay-offs to Estrada, started the impeachment trial, Leyte Gov. Jericho Petilla and Zambales Gov. Vic Magsaysay, who are all unknown in national politics. All three are recruits from the ranks of provincial and local executives, the backbone of the President's provincial constituency, which came to her rescue during two attempts to impeach her and when her government was under siege from demands for her resignation in Manila-based protest movements in 2005 and 2006.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor is the lone representative from the Arroyo Cabinet. No outstanding charismatic personality has emerged from the Cabinet with a broad national constituency built on an overarching national issue, in the manner that Ramon Magsaysay captured the nation's imagination with his successful campaign against the Huk rebellion as defense secretary in the 1950s.

The administration included Jamalul Kiram III, heir of the Sultan of Sulu, in a bid to win the Mindanao Muslim vote. It went back to the tradition of including Muslims in the senatorial ticket, dating back to the two-party system from the 1940s.

From the perspective of party machine, the opposition campaign can rely on Villar's Nacionalista Party and the breakaway segment of the Liberal Party, led by Sen. Franklin Drilon, to which Aquino belongs.

Estrada's Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) is a party only in name. There's not much of a political machine in the opposition campaign.

In contrast, the Lakas party structure and its alliances on which Ms Arroyo rode to win the 2004 presidential election have remained intact, although there is no guarantee that this structure will not crack in the 2007 campaign.

There are many imponderables. No side can claim a 12-0 result. An assessment of relative forces arrayed on the ground can serve as a reality check—and avoid huge expectations.

The truth about love

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

FILIPINOS PROVED ONCE AGAIN WHAT GREAT lovers they are when over 6,000 couples engaged in simultaneous kissing midnight of Saturday to set a new world record.

True, the event was organized as a promotional endeavor for a brand of toothpaste, but there was no doubting the amorous intent of the couples gathered, or the sincerity of the feelings that propelled the lip-locking.

After all, it was just a few days before the feast we are celebrating today, Valentine's Day, which over the years has been transformed from a simple occasion to express our love for one another into a blockbuster commercial extravaganza involving restaurants and other food establishments, florists, greeting card makers, department stores, media outlets, telecom companies and especially the uhmmm, hospitality industry. Even if, as the pop song goes, "You say it best when you say nothing at all," it seems there's no shortage of (expensive) suggestions on what to say and how to say it best come Valentine's Day.

Lovers, of course, will say that the best way to express love is to prove it by action. But unfortunately, showing love in action doesn't stop at mere kissing, as the thousands of couples did last Saturday. More often, the physical expression of love goes well past affectionate embraces or warm kisses. And that's when love or romance or sex—the seeming progression of an amorous relationship—results in consequences unforeseen and unbidden, unwanted and indeed feared.

The trouble is that Filipinos—or the segment that holds sway over public opinion and public morals—seem to prefer to confine any discussion of love and romance to safe limits and proper behavior. Bring up the unwanted consequences of sex, and ways in which to protect oneself against them, and you're sure to run into a thicket of condemnation and umbrage.

* * *

REPRODUCTION is a biological imperative. But human beings have invested the act of reproduction with moral dimensions and meanings beyond the physical.

There's nothing wrong with this. I actually prefer it this way. We are, after all, endowed with imagination and self-awareness and we have embellished the progression from physical attraction, to emotional connection and then mutual commitment with idealized concepts of romance and marriage, of love beyond time, even of love approaching the divine, if only to endow a natural process with metaphysical dimensions.

But we also need to acknowledge the physical roots of this process, of how it begins with the surge of hormones and endorphins, of how nerve endings and erotic zones can bring the couples to the heights of pleasure, and how the sexual act can result in such facts of life as pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

The whole enterprise used to be wrapped in mystery and myth. Until sex researchers, like Alfred Kinsey in the United States, through meticulously conducted interviews and massive surveys, unveiled the realities of ordinary people's sex lives, and how varied, insatiable and adventurous lovers could be. One of the most important of Kinsey's findings was that one shouldn't classify sexual practices and preferences as either "normal" or "abnormal," but only as "common" or "rare."

* * *

AND yet some people would insist on labeling behaviors not just as "normal" or "abnormal" but even as "moral" or "immoral." And when moral judgments are brought to bear on affairs of the heart and on biological imperatives, that's when guilt enters the picture, reticence rules the scene, and ignorance is deemed the better alternative to enlightenment.

It seems strange that in this day and age we are still debating the need for or wisdom of sex education. The objections raised against the module that was going to be tested on a pilot basis in public high schools centered mainly on the absence of moral judgments in their factual contents. There were no questions raised on the accuracy or scientific basis of the information the modules contained. Only that they were silent on the "morality" of certain statements, including one on the "pleasure" that the sexual act could deliver. Were the educators expected to say that finding pleasure in the sexual act was wrong, or sinful?

Religions and moral systems may assert that sex outside marriage is sinful, or harmful. But should educational modules directed at children in public schools—supposedly non-sectarian institutions—be obliged to teach what should rightly fall within the realm of religion, morals or faith?

* * *

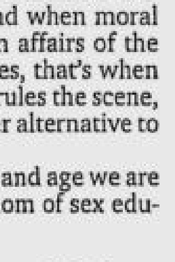
SO what are we to say to the 6,000 or so couples gathered at the SM Mall of Asia parking lot who kissed for 10 seconds at the stroke of midnight last Saturday, amid the hoopla of fireworks, confetti and red balloons? What's the message to the millions more setting dates for tonight (or for the extra-amorous, for the whole day) and drowning in the deluge of roses, chocolates, champagne and mushy messages?

That love should go beyond record-breaking kisses and once-a-year celebrations. That love, if it is genuine, is not just about *kilig* moments but about lifetime commitments. And that true love involves caring about one's partner, including taking responsibility for the consequences of one's love—be it pregnancy, a sexually transmitted infection, or heartbreak.

Love may be thrilling and exciting, or filled with the pain of parting. It can even be—and often is—both. That's why people keep falling in love, even if they know it leaves them vulnerable to another person who will have the awesome power to raise them to the pinnacle of happiness or plunge them to the depths of sorrow.

Love is uncertain and brings with it no guarantees. But when it works, it's better than any world record.

Love letters to Rizal



LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

VALENTINE'S DAY IS UPON US AGAIN. HOW can one be romantic today when the price of roses and chocolates go up, restaurant tables for two become as scarce as motel rooms and traffic turns horrendous? Some people have, over the years, become more creative by organizing catered group Valentine's dinners in homes. Everything is more relaxed, parking is not a problem, it's a good excuse as any to get together.

All the fuss made me ask if our heroes celebrated Valentine's in the late 19th century or whether this is a relatively new, post-war, celebration encouraged by Hallmark greeting cards.

When hard-pressed for yet another Valentine's Day or love-related column, I turn to Jose Rizal's correspondence. But it is only recently that I realized that while the love letters of his girlfriends have survived we do not have any of his anywhere.

According to romantic tradition, Leonor Rivera burned all of Rizal's letters a day before her wedding day to the Englishman, Mr. Kipping. Burning incriminating evidence is a historian's nightmare and, Leonor is alleged to have gathered all the ashes and tenderly sewed these into the hem of her wedding gown. Thus, as she walked down the aisle to marry a man we are told she did not love as much, she felt the pieces of a lost love crumble at her feet.

How romantic indeed. This is a scene we can easily imagine complete with violin music in the background, but what a loss to history. But then some things are better left private.

Why is it that we do not have Rizal's love letters? How come the letters from Rizal's women are scarce? Well, what Rizal did not edit out, others did for him. For example, in an often overlooked footnote in Rafael Palma's prize-winning "Biografia de Rizal" (1949), he noted that about a dozen letters from a certain Suzanne were preserved in the National Library, yet when Teodoro M. Kalaw caused the printing of the six-volume "Epistolario Rizalino" in the 1930s, these letters were not included. Was the "Epistolario" really complete?

The Suzanne letters were believed destroyed, along with the National Library, during the Battle for Manila in 1945. Fortunately, two letters have been preserved and printed in the 1961 compilation of Rizal's correspondence.

At first glance, the letters seem innocent enough. There is news of common friends we do not know or recognize, but Suzanne definitely misses Rizal such that while writing him she feels confused. She asks:

"…I hope your courts are open and I shall not have to wait a long time for your decision. Don't delay too long writing us because I wear out the soles of my shoes running to the mailbox to see if there is a letter from you."

Perhaps it is my indecent mind that puts something more in the postscript to a letter dated Oct. 1, 1890 that reads: "There will never be any home in which you are so much loved as that in Brussels, so, you little bad boy, hurry up and come back. Tell us a little about the kind of house in which you are lodged and how are the people there."

Our Rizal, our National Hero, addressed as a "little bad boy"? Terms of endearment, or is there something more between the lines? The lack of material leaves it open to many interpretations.

According to my count, there were 13 women in Rizal's life, and among them Rizal was serious enough to consider marrying three: Leonor Rivera, Nellie Boustead and Josephine Bracken. The one he truly loved unconditionally he could never marry, and that's the subject for another column. We have a letter of Leonor complaining that Rizal was not writing to her. We have Nellie clearly setting the terms for any commitment. And we have Josephine advising Rizal to find someone else acceptable to his family. Why are we left only with these whimpering lines?

Leonor in January 1881 acknowledges a letter of Rizal dated Dec. 30 (the exact date he would be executed 16 years later). The Rizal letter is not extant, but Leonor exhibits a mild paranoia:

"If I have not answered your letters, it was not because I am bored corresponding with you. In fact twice I wrote replies, but on the day I did so nobody [meaning Rizal] came to visit me at the college, so I destroyed them, and besides I was already embarrassed.

"I am doubtful if the letter is yours because the signature is different. Perhaps you have put another, fearing that I might despise it and if I despise it, it will not be your name that will be despised but someone else's. If that is what you think, you are mistaken for you do not know how glad I am when I receive one of your dear letters; but you did well in putting another name in case, as you say, it falls into the hands of strangers."

From Josephine, we have two interesting letters. One dated Aug. 13, 1896 talks about mangoes, cheese, lanzones and how badly she is treated by Rizal's family. She broke down: "If you go to Spain [and] you see any one of your fancy, you better marry her, but dear, dear me better to marry than to live like what we have been doing. I am not ashamed to let people know my life with you, but as your dear sisters are ashamed, I think you had better get married to someone else."

Expressions of love? Or despair? Or both? Snoopy historians will never know.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Heart Center at 32

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE MURAL IS STILL THERE, IN THE LOBBY, A YOUNG Imelda Marcos in the center, hands stretched out in compassion and surrounded by indigent Filipinos.

I'm referring to the lobby of the Philippine Heart Center, the first of several specialized health centers set up during the Marcos era. The Heart Center was inaugurated on Feb. 14, 1975, followed by the Lung Center, the National Kidney Institute and the Philippine Children's Medical Center, all built in Quezon City in close proximity to each other. Plans for a Brain Center, a Blood Center and an Orthopedic and Trauma Center were aborted after Ferdinand Marcos fell from power in 1986, but in recent months, there has been talk about converting that cluster of hospitals into an expanded Philippine Center for Specialized Hospitals.

But I'm jumping ahead of my story. To go back to the origins of the Heart Center, I interviewed the hospital's current director, Dr. Ludgerio D. Torres, who founded the hospital together with their first director, Dr. Avelino Aventura.

Noblesse oblige

In 1971, Torres had just returned from the United States after training in heart surgery in Harvard. The political turbulence at that time had led many doctors to leave and Torres admits that he, too, thought about that option. It would have been easy to stay on in the States.

But he was challenged by the situation at home. Cardiac surgery was a very new field and there was no local hospital equipped to handle such surgery. Torres and other surgeons had to bring their own equipment from one hospital to another, depending on who invited them and if there were sponsors for charity cases.

They were able to get the First Lady interested in the possibilities of a Heart Center, but they needed as well to convince the President. Torres still remembers the big break, when they were asked to do open heart surgery on television, for Marcos to watch. The operation was done in V. Luna Hospital on Feb. 14, 1972, on a woman with rheumatic heart disease. After the surgery, the First Lady went to see the patient, who by then was already walking. Imelda Marcos was convinced and three years later, the Philippine Heart Center for Asia was inaugurated, duly attended by celebrity cardiac surgeons Christian Barnard and Denton Cooley.

The specialty hospitals were criticized as another example of the Imeldific noblesse oblige, a way of showing the Marcoses cared for the poor. The Heart Center was targeted in particular, with the argument—flawed, incidentally—that heart diseases mainly afflicted the affluent. Besides, activists pointed to the World Health Organization's call to emphasize community-based primary health care at the village level, through health education, immunizations, clean water and nutrition.

The hospitals went on with their work. Torres rattles off figures: more than 500 cardiologists trained, 80 cardiac surgeons, thousands of patients served, not just from the Philippines but from all over Southeast Asia.

Trailblazing

But what catches my attention is the way the Heart Center did trailblaze in many ways.

To attract more doctors, their founders had asked that they be exempted from the rules of other government hospitals. Their doctors could engage in private practice. Hospital earnings, rather than going back to the National Treasury, could be retained and plowed back into hospital operations.

Today, the Department of Health has modified its rules to allow many other government hospitals to corporatize as the Heart Center did, again not without controversy, but during another interview I had with DOH officials a few weeks back, there was satisfaction with the way government hospitals have been able to improve using these new policies.

In the beginning, the Heart Center seemed intimidating; today, their problem is they get more patients than they can handle. I've wondered if part of the attraction comes with their rooms. Within the massive gray building are wards and rooms which should be models for other hospitals, with views of green spaces and wide corridors for the many visiting relatives and friends.

The rooms aside, the patient overload comes because most Filipinos are unaware that the hospital was intended mainly for heart surgery. At the Emergency Room, you'll find patients who have been brought in from the provinces with all kinds of complaints that can be handled quite competently in other hospitals. Torres says a few private hospitals can even handle cardiac surgery. Several years back, when he had taken leave from the Heart Center, he helped to establish St. Luke's Heart Institute.

And the public sector? The Heart Center is moving to get the government's regional hospitals to become satellite heart centers that can handle cardiac surgery. Satellites have been established in Davao, Cebu and Legazpi, with more to follow. A Heart Center team goes around the country to do open heart surgery, to show, in Torres' words, that these are "*simple lang.*"

The main obstacle is cost, rather than technology or skills. A bypass can run to about P500,000. There is a government subsidy fund of P150 million but that's enough for only 300 surgeries. Other sources of subsidies are PhilHealth (but only up to about P50,000), the pork-barrel funds of members of Congress, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and occasional Good Samaritans like the Lotus Foundation described in yesterday's INQUIRER.

But, Torres observes glumly, that they still have a backlog of 800 patients and "about 30 percent will die even before they can be admitted for heart surgery."

Full circle

Critics of Imelda Marcos' specialized centers, myself included, will have to concede that these hospitals have filled particular niches. If plans push through, the proposed Philippine Center for Specialized Hospitals will include a Women's Health Center, incorporating the now run-down Fabella Medical Center, which in a way was one of the original specialized hospitals, dealing mainly with child deliveries, currently numbering more than a hundred a day.

The Heart Center shows what can be done to train specialists and to share skills at regional, and hopefully, provincial levels. Torres says that besides heart surgeons, their doctors go on to other sub-specialties, for example cardiac pediatrics.

But he acknowledges they do have problems with staff turnover including, with some of their specialists becoming nurses to get jobs overseas. "They do it for their families," he explains.

So we come full circle with the story of the Heart Center, founded by Filipino doctors who dared to come home and stay, but who now have to live with a new wave of brain drain. In many ways, the story of the Heart Center is the story of our health care system, one with many trials and tribulations but one, too, with its share of successes and achievements.

Punishing DepEd teachers for the incompetence of others

MAY I CALL THE ATTENTION OF the officials concerned, most of all, of President Macapagal-Arroyo to a problem that has been pestering Government Service Insurance System members, especially the teachers and employees of the Department of Education, in connection with their GSIS premiums.

Whenever a claim is due these poor GSIS members, the GSIS deducts "premiums in arrears" as underpayments, plus interests and surcharges. As a result, a number of them get so little, or nothing at all, when their policies mature or when they retire.

As a former teacher, I know that the Department of Budget and Management is authorized to automatically deduct from the monthly salaries of DepEd teachers and employees their corresponding GSIS contributions (premiums). When there are salary adjustments, even though the differentials are paid in a supplementary payroll, the corresponding deductions are still made.

The teachers have nothing to do with remitting the deductions to the GSIS. And they have no way of knowing whether or not their contributions are forwarded to the GSIS. All that they can be sure of is that deductions (representing their GSIS contributions) have been made on their salaries and these are shown in their pay slips. Therefore, if there are underpayments, it should be the collecting agency, not the poor teachers and employees, who should be faulted.

The paramount purpose of the GSIS is to provide for the welfare and future of government employees, especially after their retirement. But when Winston Garcia took over the helm of the GSIS, he transformed it into an institution primarily aimed at earning big profits, never mind if at the expense of the members, the raison d'être of the GSIS' existence. Yes, we, the members, are the very reason, and no other, for the GSIS' existence.

So, we appeal to the President to direct the GSIS board to pass a resolution to automatically consider as paid the "underpayments" in the records of GSIS members, especially if they are DepEd teachers and employees. They should not be made to suffer for the negligence, inefficiency or corruption of collection agencies.

—ANTONIO N. DOMINGO,
Barangay 22,
PM Castro St., Laoag City

$200-M 'whispers' are just rumors

CONRADO BANAL III, IN HIS Jan. 30 column, made several false and unfair allegations against the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Monetary Board, based on what he described as rumor and "whispers going around financial circles."

For the information of Banal and INQUIRER readers, the Bangko Sentral has not received what he referred to as an application for an outward remittance of $200 million.

—CELIA M. GONZALEZ,
managing director,
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas,
A. Mabini Street, Malate, Manila

The facts, not just MJ's word vs Erap's

MARK JIMENEZ'S SPIN ON HIS $2 million that reportedly ended up in the bank account of former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez has met overwhelming public disbelief. While MJ's reputation as someone who is able to "deliver" on business deals has thrived in "business" circles, his credibility in other matters has taken an opposite direction.

The other versions should not be taken as gospel truths either. But a narration of the facts and events relative thereto makes the other versions not just the plausible but also the more credible ones. It's not simply Erap's word versus MJ's—although the former would not suffer in comparison.

Refer to "Timeline—Impsa deal" (INQUIRER, 1/12/07) and Norman Bordadora's news story, titled "Plunder may still be filed vs Nani if there's new evidence," in the Inquirer's Jan. 17 issue.

Note that as early as 1995, the Philippine government (through the National Power Corp.), then under President Fidel Ramos, had effectively already accepted the Impsa proposal—subject to the so-called Swiss challenge which was reaffirmed in 1996.

True, the Impsa contract was well within Erap's power to honor or abort, and he did "act as the unwitting godfather" in deference to the nation's integrity sometime in 1999.

However, the Nov. 6, 1998 contract, most probably remained unworkable since then, presumably because of the issue of sovereign guarantee, which was "conceded" by the Philippines early in 2001 soon after Edsa II (bankers will attest to the make or break nature of this issue).

The rest is history. We have, however, the rare opportunity of searching for the truth. Let us not miss out on this as we have with earlier ones.

—ALFREDO V. ASUNCION,
93 Castrillo St.,
Barangay Ugong Norte, QC

Veterans in GMA's mind

I RESPOND TO JOSE Q. BORBON'S LETTER, "Has the gov't forgotten RA 7696?" (INQUIRER, 2/5/07)

The President has most certainly not forgotten RA 7696. Passed in 1994, the law provides for a monthly disability pension of P1,700 to veterans and retirees who have reached the age of 70, or P500 monthly to their widows. When President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed the presidency in 2001, she herself mentioned this, at a major gathering of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines, as a "debt" her administration had inherited. Per PVAO computation as of 2006, the government, under RA 7696, owes the veterans around P21 billion, covering a 12-year period.

The single major obstacle preventing the PVAO from paying the veterans is that RA 7696 did not appropriate an annual budget for its implementation. Thus, for the last 12 years, veterans have been forced to rely on the generosity and kindness of Congress, which is the only body that can appropriate the funds.

Unfortunately, Congress obviously sees this disability pension as a legal fiction, more of a bonus given to 70-year-old veterans and retirees even if they have no actual physical disability. This is not to say that Congress is wrong here. It may be that in our legislators' view, the similarly crucial needs of many other marginalized sectors of our society should also be funded by the government.

In recognition of the fact that RA 7696 is a law that must be implemented, President Arroyo worked for the passage of new laws to provide for the payment of the government "debt" under RA 7696. In 2006, the House of Representatives passed House Bill 5380. This would have given veterans the right to develop and manage (but without selling) certain high-value government property and earmark the earnings from these property to pay the arrears. Unfortunately, the Senate defense committee did not have material time to pass the counterpart Senate Bill 2241.

Veterans should be assured that in the new Congress, we will again seek appropriations for RA 7696's implementation. If again this is not possible, we will lobby to have HB 5380 and SB 2241 refiled. We are intent on giving to veterans what is due them under the law.

—JESUS TERRY FERRER ADEVOSO,
assistant secretary,
Presidential Assistant for Veterans Affairs,
Office of the President, Malacañang, Manila

When journalism and advertising get muddled

THE ARTICLE TITLED "MCDONALD'S' SEcret ingredient" in the Lifestyle section (INQUIRER, 2/4/07) is a supreme example of how journalism and advertising can get dangerously and disappointingly muddled. It failed to mention the health risks fast-food chains pose for kids and adults alike.

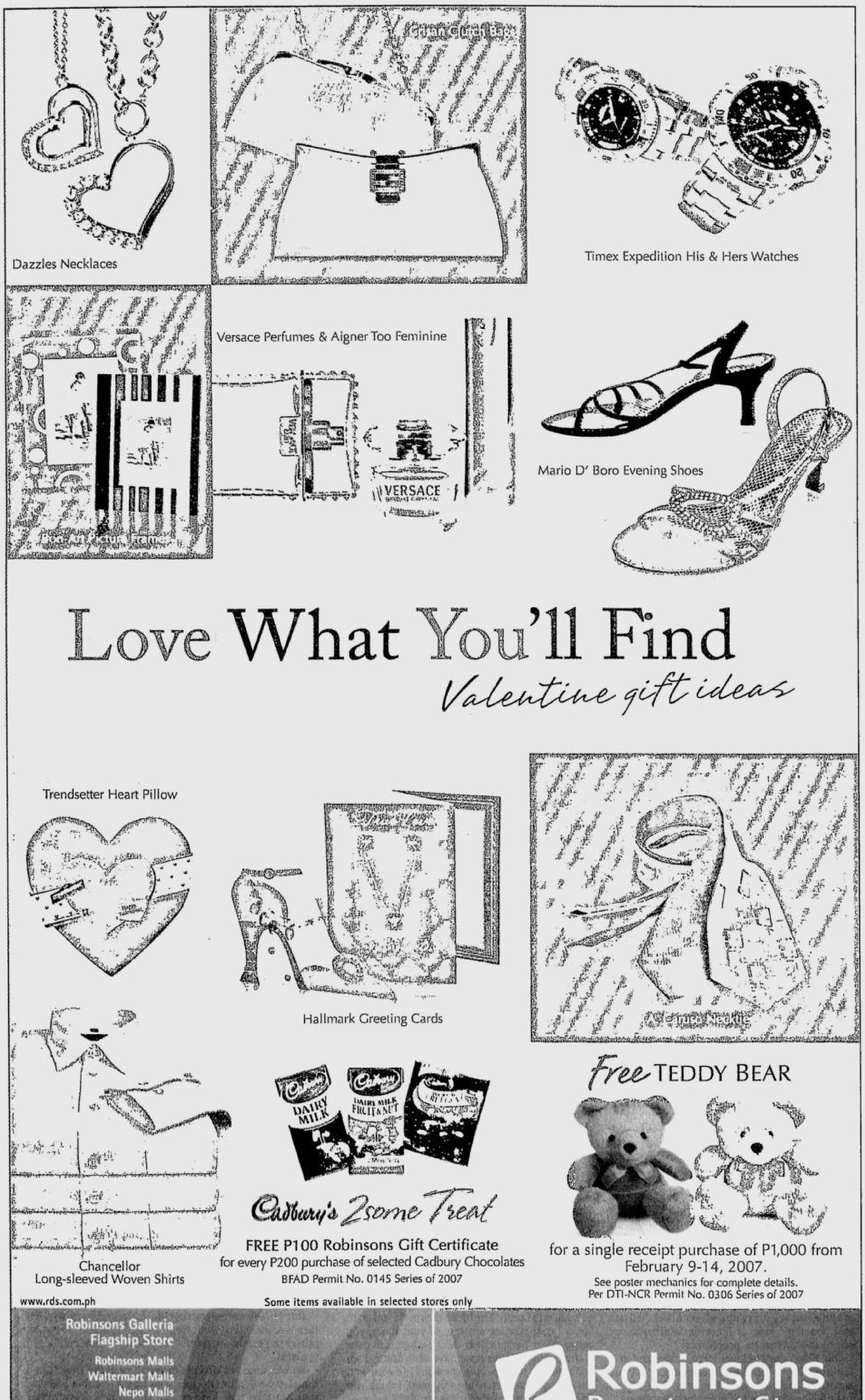
While McDonald's outlets may indeed be clean and customer-friendly, McDonald's and other fast-food establishments serve food that are loaded with trans fats, saturated fats and calories—three of the main culprits of heart disease and obesity around the globe, including the Philippines. If you don't believe me, read "Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal" by Eric Schlosser, or watch "Super Size Me: A Film of Epic Proportions" by Morgan Spurlock; or find out in "The Omnivore's Dilemma" by Michael Pollan what may be in the food offered. Guess what: in a certain dish, there are 38 "secret" ingredients, including tertiary butylhydroquinone (TBHQ), an antioxidant derived from petroleum, specifically butane, used to preserve freshness.

Compelling evidence suggests that heart disease starts in childhood as plaque begins to form on artery walls as early as the pre-teen years. As parents, we need to teach our children about the dangers of fast food and not let them be lured by the gimmicky kid-directed advertising. My two children, ages 7 and 10 watched "Super Size Me" when it was released three years ago. Since then, I can count the number of times they have eaten in fast-food establishments, and those were usually at birthday parties.

The fast-food industry spends billions of dollars on advertising. Esteemed publications such as the INQUIRER should at least let its readers know the paid-for ads. And if those are not paid-for ads, they should rethink their priorities, promoting fast-food chains or offering readers information to improve their health.

—CATHERINE JONES

The McDonald's spread was an advertisement.—Ed.



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Ombudsman sticks to Iloilo gov dismissal

By Jolene R. Bulambot and Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE OMBUDSMAN UPHELD AN ORder dismissing Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Sr., which would also bar him from holding any public office.

In a 14-page resolution, Ombudsman Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez approved the findings of assistant special prosecutor III Marina Demetrio and acting director Silvia Beltran.

The order said Tupas did not present new evidence to merit a reversal of Demetrio's findings.

Director Virginia Palanca-Santiago, officer-in-charge of the Deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas, said the resolution was executory, unless the Court of Appeals issues an order to stop it.

But Tupas Sr. yesterday said he wasn't bothered by the Ombudsman order.

"We expected the denial of our motion and this is necessary so that we can bring the case to the Court of Appeals, and if needed, to the Supreme Court," he said.

Lawyer Salvador Cabaluna, provincial legal officer and one of Tupas' legal counsels in the case, said his office has not received a copy of the order but would appeal the case to the CA.

Tupas said the decision has no bearing on the petition for certiorari he filed at the CA questioning the authority of the Ombudsman in issuing a dismissal order.

The governor cited Section 60 of the Local Government Code, which provides that only courts could remove elected local officials.

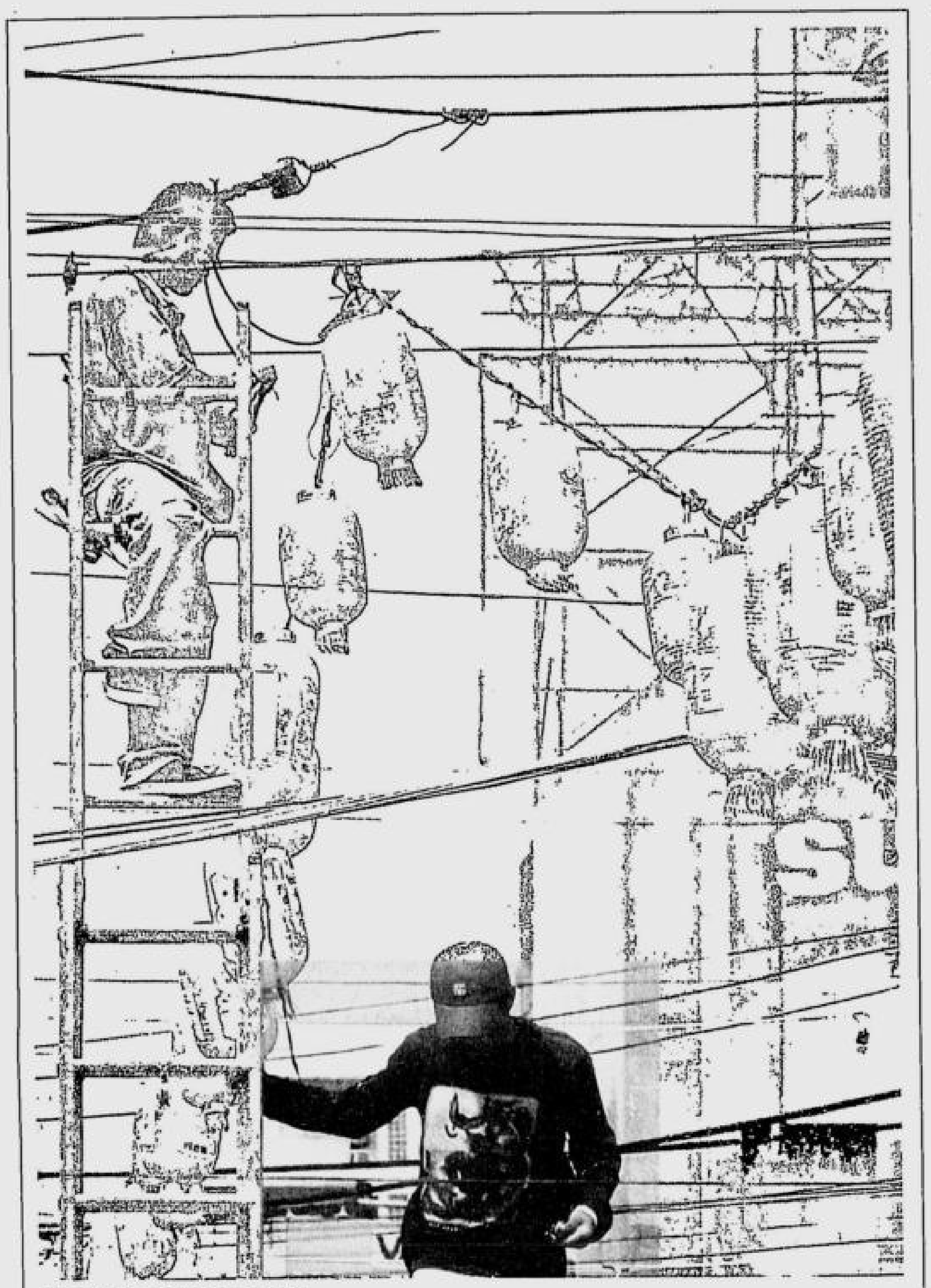
Tupas said he was hoping that the CA will rule in his favor.

The CA issued a 60-day temporary restraining order (TRO) on Jan. 17, suspending the enforcement of the dismissal order against Tupas and provincial board members Domingo Oso and Cecilia Capadosa.

Santiago said the Ombudsman was waiting for an order to enforce the dismissal but would wait for the lapse of the 60-day temporary restraining order of the CA.

The Ombudsman said Tupas and provincial board members Domingo Oso and Cecilia Capadosa, were guilty of malversation of public funds, through falsification of public documents.

Tupas was accused of approving the transfer and release of P85,000 from the Community Direct Action Project (CDAP) to the Provincial Board Members League of the Philippines (PBMLP).



ILOILO CHINATOWN ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Filipino Chinese residents of Iloilo City start preparations for the Chinese New Year, installing Chinese lanterns atop streets in the city. The city hosts a large community of Filipino Chinese, mostly businessmen who ventured out of Binondo, Manila, the traditional base of many Filipino Chinese. The Chinese community in Iloilo City was expected to also hold the traditional dragon dance.

Lim bares JDV bid to make him drop out of race

DAGUPAN CITY—MAYOR BENJAMIN LIM, who is emerging to be the top rival of Speaker Jose de Venecia for a seat in the House of Representatives, said emissaries from the Speaker's camp have been visiting him to dissuade him from joining the congressional race.

He won't name names, however.

In 2001, when he was about to run for reelection as congressman, Lim was convinced by administration party officials to give way to De Venecia's congressional bid and run instead for mayor of Dagupan.

Lim also said he would have to do some housekeeping in the city government.

"We should fix Dagupan because there are still many things that we will have to do. And should I leave Dagupan and move to another state in my political career, I should be able to hand it down to a more responsible leader," he said.

Last month, Lim's son, Bryan, was floated as a likely mayoral candidate here. But Lim said he is leaving the decision to his 28-year-old son.

"I don't want to impose upon him what he wants to be because that is something that I don't do to my family," Lim said in an earlier interview.

The young Lim studied management at Boston College in Massachusetts and law at the Ateneo de Manila University.

Two weeks ago, Lim appointed his son as his chief of staff. Bryan has been actively participating in city government affairs since.

De Venecia Jr. said he welcomed the planned congressional bid of Lim, saying the mayor is free to run because "it's a free country and [we are in] a democracy."

Gabriel Cardinoza and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Mercury poisoning fear closes school

CABANATUAN CITY—An elementary school in a village in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija, was ordered temporarily closed due to a mercury leak from a broken thermometer stick.

Rolyster Gustillo, Pantabangan health officer, issued the order after 16 pupils of the Cambitala Elementary School and their teacher complained of dizziness after a thermometer stick used as a teaching aid in the class fell off a shelf last week.

A police report said the victims were taken to a local hospital for observation.

The students, according to the report, were cleaning their classroom when one of them hit a thermometer stick kept in a cabinet and it fell on the concrete floor.

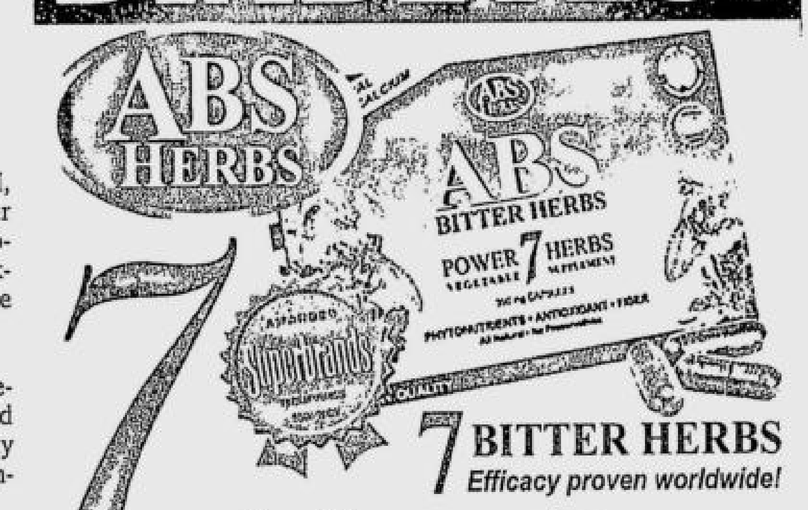
The report said the thermometer's mercury content spilled on the floor.

Police said although the thermometer was small, the students and their teacher complained of dizziness after inhaling its fume.

Gustillo had advised the police that the school would be reopened only after the Department of Health certifies that the school compound was safe.

Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon

DIABETES?



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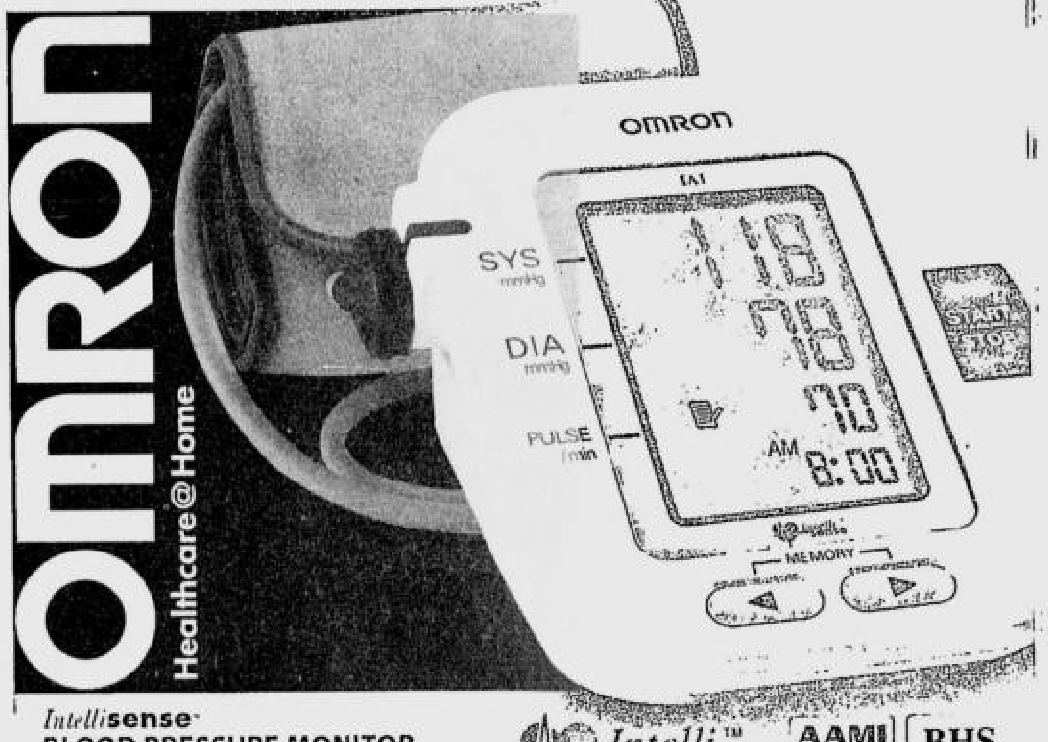

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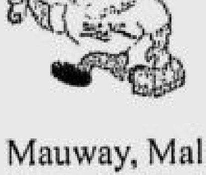
Temporary water interruption in portions of Mandaluyong and Quezon City needed to upgrade facilities



Manila Water is currently upgrading its distribution lines to improve the supply and distribution of water in the East Zone. We regret that we have to temporarily cut water supply in some portions of Mandaluyong and Quezon City. The temporary cutoff will start 12:01 a.m. up to 4:01 am, Friday, February 16, 2007. Areas affected will be: Barangays Mauway, Malamig, Highway Hills, Ugong Norte, Plainview, Ilaya, Itaas, Ibaba, Buayang Bato, Pleasant Hills, Addition Hills, Wack-Wack and Greenhills in Mandaluyong City and Barangays Corinthian Village, Camp Aguinaldo, White Plains and Valle Verde 6, all in Quezon City.

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

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(PDI - Feb. 14, 2007)

New puffer fish alert out as 4 die

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND Aquatic Resources (BFAR) issued a new warning against eating puffer fish following the deaths of four persons after they ate the poisonous fish.

Four persons in Madridejos, Bantayan Island, Cebu died on Friday after they ate a fish known locally as *tikong*, a kind of puffer fish similar to the *buriring*.

Lourdes Arciaga, BFAR regional spokesperson, said the *tikong* is very poisonous and its toxins are fatal.

"It has tetrodotoxin, which is deadlier than cyanide based on a research study in the United States," she said.

According to Reference.com, the tetrodotoxin is a lethal poison, about 1,200 times deadlier than cyanide. A single puffer fish has enough poison to kill 30 adult humans, it added.

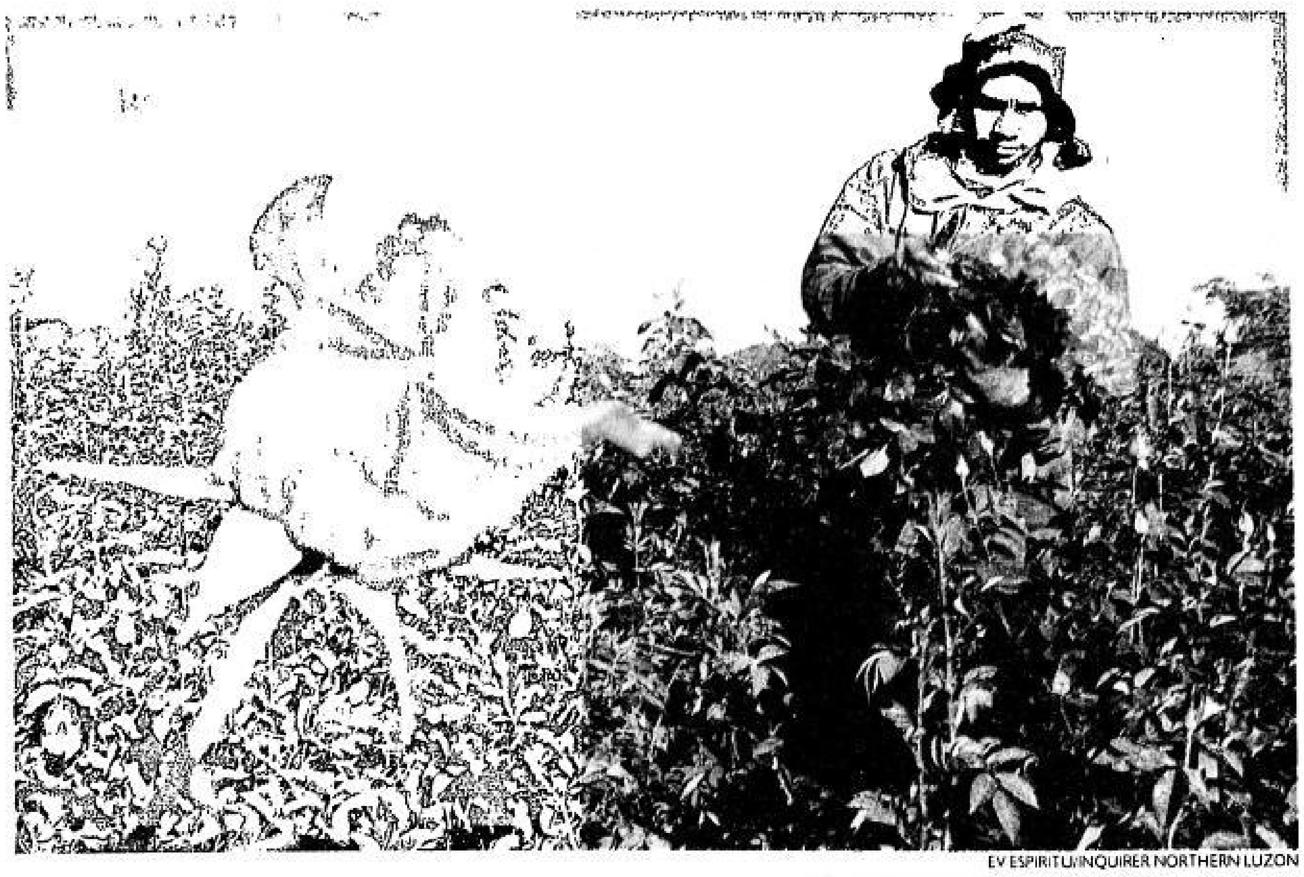
The hospital authorities in Bantayan identified the four fatalities as Mario Villacarlos, 28; Bienvenido Maru, 55; Arnel Fuentes, 35; and Romel Alolor, 25.

Except for Villacarlos who died in his house, the three other victims died at the Bantayan District Hospital in the evening of Friday.

Five other fishermen who have eaten the puffer fish—couple Antonio and Delia Ramirez; 8-year-old John Carlo Alolor, Felicisimo Espina and Salvador Alolor—were hospitalized.

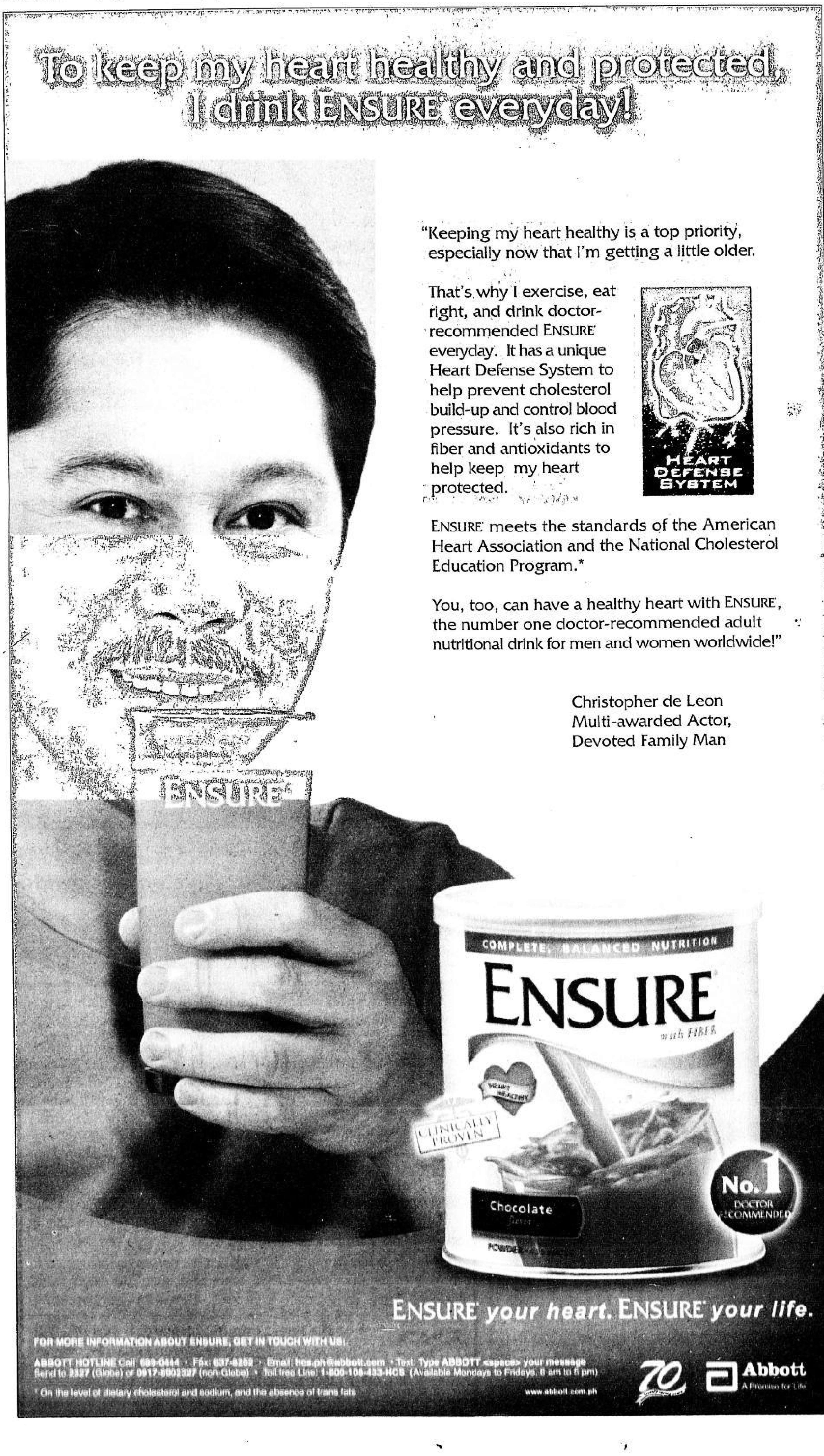
The fatalities were having a liquor party in the afternoon of Friday (Feb. 9) in Barangay Malbago, Madridejos, during which they ate the puffer fish given by a fisherman, Rafael Rosales, the Madridejos police said.

Another fisherman, identified as Wilfredo Macoy, cooked the puffer fish, but he was not poisoned because he fell asleep during the liquor party.



EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

FLOWER WORK
Ariel Tiago, 24, may literally be the thorn among the roses he was harvesting for Valentine's Day. Tiago belongs to a group of Ibaloi farmers in Barangays Bahong, Alno and Alapang in La Trinidad, Benguet, who produce the roses sold in Metro Manila.



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No bird flu symptoms seen in Sorsogon

PRIETO DIAZ, SORSOGON—THE MAYOR of this town and the farmer, who caught a bird from Tokyo, Japan suspected of being a bird-flu carrier, remained in good health and did not show any symptom of the disease.

Mayor Benito Doma admitted that he also touched and even held the bird when it was brought to him by Leoncio Detablan, a 50-year-old farmer of Barangay Lupi in this town at about 5 p.m., Feb. 5.

Doma confirmed that the bird, a heron, indeed had a stainless steel tag labeled Tokyo, Japan and appeared to be very weak.

The mayor said that after a perfunctory physical examination of the bird he immediately ordered it buried, based on what he learned from a previous seminar he attended about bird flu.

Doma said he was still in perfect health and felt nothing wrong with his body.

"It shows that the bird was probably not infected after all, and that's very good news," he told the INQUIRER.

He said Detablan was also in good health, based on the information relayed to him by barangay officials of Lupi, but said he would still send a health worker to check the farmer's health just to make sure that nothing was wrong with him.

Gov. Raul Lee called all the mayors to a meeting yesterday together with veterinary, health, environment and agriculture officials to discuss proper procedures that must be undertaken when a similar incident occurs in the future.

Lee said he had instructed health and veterinary officials to present to the mayors the proper protocol that must be observed under such circumstances.

He ordered the mayors to personally attend the meeting so they would know what has to be done.

Dr. Enrique Espiritu, provincial veterinary officer, said local officials must have keen interest on this issue as the occurrence of bird flu was a great possibility.

"It is a reality that this disease would occur eventually. It's just a matter of time," he said.

Espiritu said he had already informed the National Avian Influenza Task Force about the Prieto-Diaz incident but, he said, he got no reaction from the task force.

He said he would recommend to the governor the mobilization of the bird flu task force that the governor created in 2005.

Bobby Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Cops charge INC member with slays

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—POLICE FILED murder charges against a member of the Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) who was held responsible for the massacre of an INC pastor and his family last week.

Charged with three counts of murder was suspect Sherwin Israel Api, 29, a resident of Tanza, Cavite.

The suspect was a first cousin of victim Darius Api, 34, who was found dead inside the pastor's quarters inside the Iglesia ni Cristo Compound in Barangay San Juan 2, Ternate on Thursday.

Found beside the pastor's body were those of his wife Antery, 33, and their six-year-old son Kurt Russel.

The three bore gunshot wounds in the heads.

Chief Insp. Danilo Morzo, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Cavite, said robbery could be the motive for the killings as the cal. 45 that the victim allegedly owned was missing. He said the suspect could have used the same gun to kill the victims.

He said police also received information that the suspect was a member of a gunrunning syndicate and could have already sold the gun before his arrest.

Api was one of three men whom police earlier invited for questioning after church members discovered the bodies of the victims, he said.

Morzo said police now consider the killings as solved after they filed the cases against the arrested suspect.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

VALENZUELA CITY

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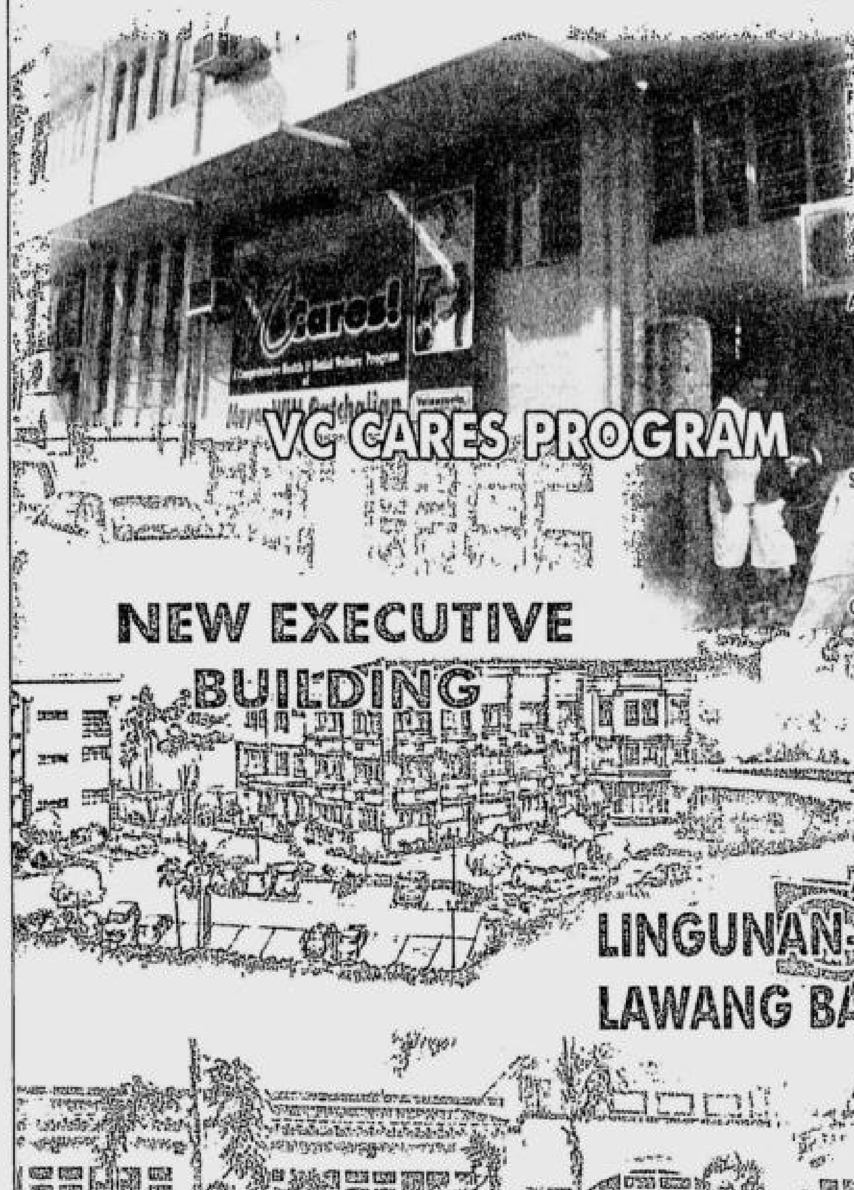
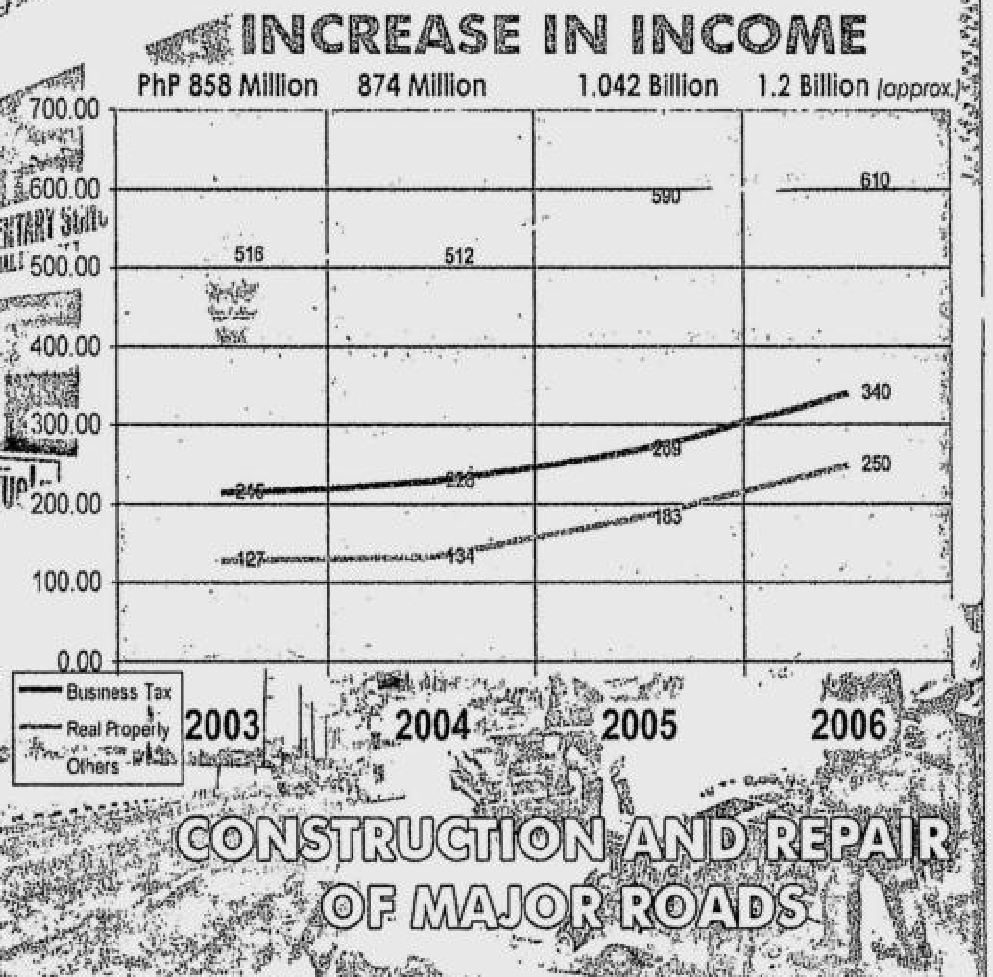


LANDMARKS TO PROGRESS

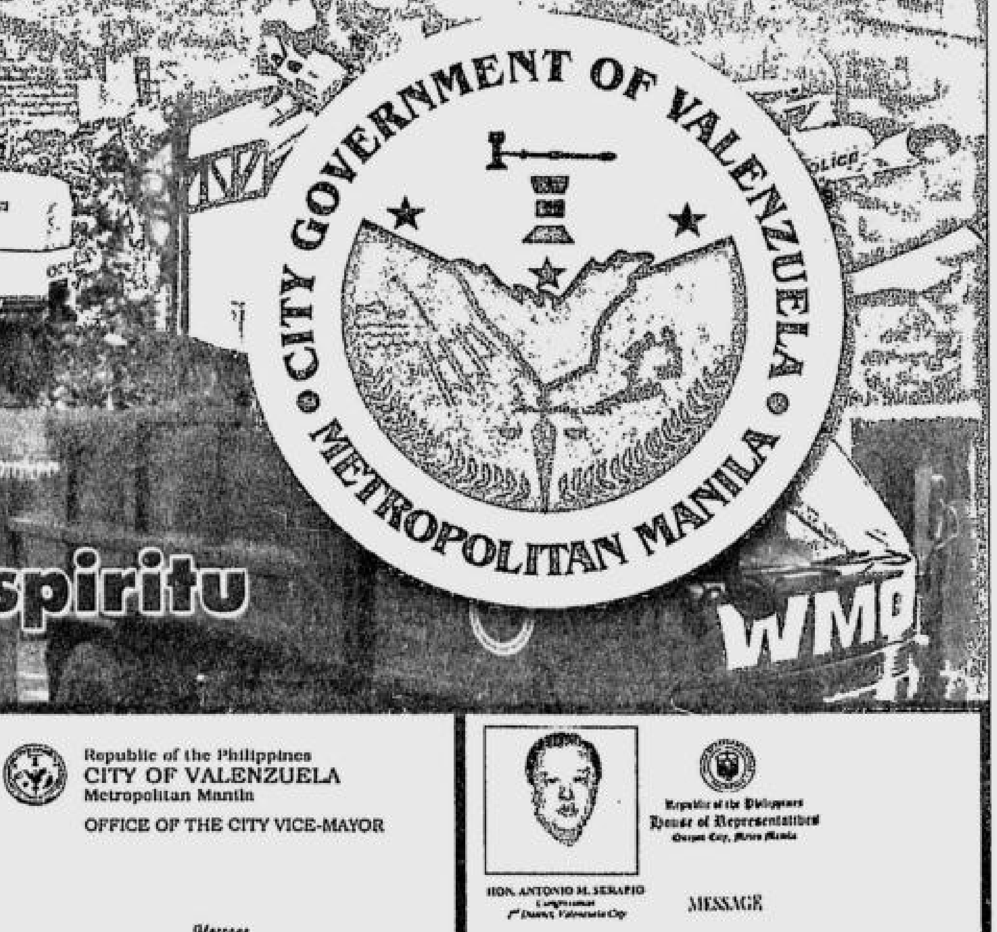
February 14, 1997	-	Conversion of the Municipality of Valenzuela into a Highly Urbanized City
July 2004	-	Valenzuela, may DISIPLINA! The City works for the realization of its vision as a clean, *safe, peaceful, orderly, progressive and globally-competitive center of trade and industry.*
August 2004	-	Establishment of the **Valenzuela City Action Center**, integrating the Public Order and Safety Management Office, Waste Management Office, Rivers & Waterways Management Office, and Clean Brigade, to better serve the constituents, and provide for a comprehensive cleanliness and order program for the City.
September 2004	-	**Buhayin ang Sidewalk Project** and repair and reconstruction of major roads in the City to ease traffic flow and provide for the safety and convenience of motorists.
October 2004	-	[illegible] garbage collection efficiency, with 51 dump trucks and mini dump trucks and 278 garbage collectors on 24-hour shifts.
		Mobilization of 193 volunteer streetsweepers to maintain cleanliness on the streets throughout the City.
January 2005		28% increase in tax collection, 30% savings in infrastructure projects and 20% savings in the cost of materials.
April 2005		[illegible] City Government completes construction and repair of [illegible]00 additional classrooms in public schools throughout the City.
May 2005		The City Government turns over the first batch of vehicles to support the operations of the Valenzuela City Police, and maintain peace and order in the City.
August 2005	-	Professionalization of the City Government Employees well underway with training programs and institution of new guidelines for employees.
December 2005	-	Completion of repair and upgrading of 34 City and Barangay roads, drainages and sidewalks in 32 barangays to support the infrastructure requirements of this growing hub of industry.
January 2006	-	Groundbreaking of the Lingunan-Lawang Bato Vehicular Overpass which crosses the North Luzon Expressway and provides an alternate route to motorists going from the western part of the City to decongest the traffic along the Maysan-Novaliches road.
	-	Groundbreaking of the 4-storey, 40-classroom Gen. T. de Leon National High School for some 3,000 students in the barangay.
May 2006	-	Launching of the **VC Cares** program which provides free healthcare service to deserving Valenzuelanos.
July 2006	-	Premier of the musical play **Nom-de-Plume: Madlang-Away**, based on the life of Dr. Pio Valenzuela. Developing local talents and enriching our culture.
December 2006	-	Completion of 43 infrastructure projects, encompassing road repairs and construction, upgrading of drainages and improvement of sidewalks throughout the City.
	-	Inauguration of the **Valenzuela City Finance Center *Geronimo S. Angeles Hall*** and full computerization of business-related transactions and internal systems and procedures for the comfort and convenience of taxpayers.
January 2007	-	Valenzuela City Police awarded **Best Police Station in Metro Manila** with a 16% decline in crime incidents, the highest posted decline in crime incidents among 13 cities and 4 municipalities in the NCR.
February 14, 2007	-	Groundbreaking of the New Executive Building of the City Government Center. The proud new landmark of a truly vibrant center of trade and industry.

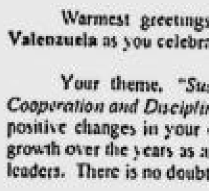
INCREASE IN INCOME



Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian

Vice Mayor Tony Espiritu


CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR OF MAJOR ROADS
CITY GOVERNMENT OF VALENZUELA
METROPOLITAN MANILA
WMO



Office of the President
of the Philippines
MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

MESSAGE

Warmest greetings to the local officials and residents of the City of Valenzuela as you celebrate your *9th Charter Anniversary*.

Your theme, *"Sustaining Growth and Progress through Hard Work, Cooperation and Discipline,"* shows your readiness to bring about substantial and positive changes in your city. The City of Valenzuela has achieved tremendous growth over the years as a result of the dynamism and the vitality of its people and leaders. There is no doubt that the city will stay its course in the years ahead.

My administration is committed to strengthen the economy, heal the deep divisions within our society, promote tourism and investments, and create more jobs. I hope that you will remain a partner of government in achieving these goals.

More power, and *Mabuhay kayong lahat!*

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

MANILA
14 February 2007

Republic of the Philippines
CITY GOVERNMENT OF VALENZUELA
Metropolitan Manila

MESSAGE

Valenzuela has come so far from the founding agricultural suburbia that it was decades ago. Now, our beloved City is a vibrant, thriving center of trade and industry.

For this, the City Government recognizes the efforts of all Valenzuelanos in pushing our City to the forefront of local economic development.

As we celebrate our 9th Cityhood Anniversary, let not all our successes go to waste because of complacency. Let us, instead, remain vigilant in our quest for excellence, as a City and as a people.

Sustaining the growth and progress we have so far achieved requires hard work, cooperation and discipline. I believe that we can do so much more if we all put our minds and our efforts to it.

For our beloved Valenzuela City,

Mabuhay ang Valenzuelanos!

Mabuhay ang Lungsod ng Valenzuela!

SHERWIN GATCHALIAN
City Mayor

Republic of the Philippines
CITY OF VALENZUELA
Metropolitan Manila
OFFICE OF THE CITY VICE-MAYOR

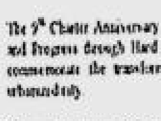
Message

The office of the City Vice Mayor take great pride in greeting our fellow Valenzuelanos as we celebrate the 9th City Charter Anniversary with a theme, Sustaining Growth and Progress through Hard work, Cooperation and Discipline.

As we take another step forward for another year as a highly urbanized city, I appeal to the hearts and mind of our fellow Valenzuelanos to reunite once more as we celebrate this significant occasion.

Mabuhay and God Bless!

ANTONIO R. ESPIRITU
City Vice Mayor



HON. ANTONIO M. SERAPIO
Congressman
1st District, Valenzuela City

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

MESSAGE

The 9th Charter Anniversary on February 14, 2007 with the theme "Sustaining Growth and Progress through Hard work, Cooperation and Discipline" is a fitting theme to commemorate the transformation of Valenzuela from a municipality to a highly urbanized city.

Through the course of its development as a city, I urge everyone to keep up the good work and maintain a high standard of service we strive to provide, in order to strengthen the unity among us Valenzuelanos, and to pave way in reaching our mission and to face the challenges of Valenzuela as a city.

As is, I convey my warmest felicitations and best wishes to the people of Valenzuela as to all the leaders on this special occasion.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

ANTONIO M. SERAPIO
Congressman
1st District, Valenzuela City

Advt

Groups to make Sierra Madre logging poll issue

LUCENA CITY—RAMPANT LOGGING IN Sierra Madre will be a crucial issue in the May 14 elections, a Catholic priest and an environmentalist group said.

"Definitely, continued illegal logging in Sierra Madre despite the government declared log ban will be a crucial issue this coming elections. And this applies to all candidates—local and national," said Fr. Pete Montallana, coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples' Apostolate in the Prelature of Infanta and chair of Task Force Sierra Madre.

He said his group has started to scrutinize candidates' backgrounds and their stand on Sierra Madre logging.

"We will expose and oppose candidates who allow logging in Sierra Madre, whether legal or illegal. We will campaign hard against coddlers of forest rapists but we will surely support candidates with a genuine environmental protection advocacy," Montallana said.

He asked voters, especially in northern Quezon, to also examine the environmental track records of all candidates vying for local and national positions.

"With the fragile condition of our environment, especially Sierra Madre, the last kind of officials that we want to run our government are those fence sitters with regards to environmental protection causes," the priest said.

Lawyer Sheila de Leon, executive director of Tanggol Kalikasan (TK), a public interest environmental legal defense center, asked voters in Real-Infanta-General Nakar towns not to forget the 2004 tragedy that left thousands of people dead and millions of pesos in property destroyed.

"The voters should not forget those elected officials who remained passive despite the tragedy and now seek another mandate from the people," De Leon said.

She urged civic groups, religious and other sectors to raise the continued destruction of Sierra Madre as a crucial election issue. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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It doesn't stop there because more perks await PLDT Home Rewards Card holders. If you're a busy couple with not much time to travel, you can take your sweetheart to a romantic Valentine's dinner out at Bollywood Café, Cafe Adriatico or Cafe Havana. If you're date prefers a casual dining experience, you can have a pizza date at Shakey's or sisig at Dencio's. For McDonald's lovers, you can get a free upsize of fries or a drink of your choice.

Relax and unwind with your loved one by getting a massage or facial at The Spa or pamper yourself at Ystilo Salon. You can even spend hours serenading each other at Family KTV and playing your favorite arcade games at Timezone. With a PLDT Home Rewards Card on hand, you can get the coolest discounts and freebies in these fine establishments in a flash.

And if that wasn't enough, you'll receive more special gifts on top of the cool PLDT Home Rewards instant perks.

Now, you can call your special someone anywhere in the Philippines or abroad for free as PLDT Home Rewards Card also comes with "Load Rewards," where you get an initial load of P30 for free NDD and IDD calls. This initial load can also be used for free PLDT Vibe Internet access. The initial load is activated upon dialing 10-122 or a call transaction, and is valid for 30 days.

What's more, PLDT will automatically load your PLDT Home Rewards Card on your birthday and other special occasions. You will be notified via SMS, email or call out every time PLDT loads your account. This gesture is a simple and heartfelt way of celebrating the loyal PLDT subscriber.

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ADVT.

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
EEP PHONE ENGLISH SYSTEM, INC. 1040 EDSA, Magallanes Village Makati City	Sang Ho Kim	Korean Finance Assistant
EEP PHONE ENGLISH SYSTEM, INC. 1040 EDSA, Magallanes Village Makati City	Mi Sook Jang	Account Officer
Y&R PHILIPPINES, INC. (MEC MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS) 20/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza 681 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Aditi Anand	Technical Consultant
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave. Makati City	Astrid Camil Putri	Training Developer MD
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave. Makati City	Mulyadi	Functional Analyst
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave. Makati City	Riny Savitri Kawi	GL Chart of Accounts Mapping Specialist
PRU LIFE CORPORATION OF U.K. 25/F Tower 1, The Enterprise Center, 6766 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Charlie Espinola Oropeza	Director
SEAPAC PHILIPPINES, INC. 100 Tantuco Compd., M. Concepcion St., Brgy. Buting, Pasig City	James Chant	Managing Director/Chairman
WCL SOLUTIONS (PHIL.) CORPORATION 28/F, Enterprise Tower 2, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Minoru Isaji	Treasurer
ASPAC GENERAL MERCHANDISE LTD. CO. 816 Pacific Bldg., Quintin Paredes St., Binondo, Manila	Jianhong Lu	Supervisor
ASPAC GENERAL MERCHANDISE LTD. CO. 816 Pacific Bldg., Quintin Paredes St., Binondo, Manila	Feipeng Gong	Consultant
TOTAL (PHILIPPINES) CORPORATION 31/F ExportBank, Plaza cor. Sen. Gil Puyat & Don Chino Roces Aves., Makati City	Gerhard Maarten Dekker	Vice President for Retail
DOORA CARGO FORWARDERS, INC. Rm. 110 Skyfreight Bldg Ninoy Aquino Ave., Parañaque City	Kyung Ju Kim	Sales Manager
HEADLINE INFORMATION & ELECTRONICS TRADING CORPORATION Unit 307, SRI Bldg., 2444 F.B. Harrison St., Pasay City	Jung Ho Park	Vice President for Import Sales
MADANGBAL, INC. Unit 6C Globe Telecom Plaza, Tower I, Pioneer cor. Madison Sts., Mandaluyong City	Soon Young Kim (w/o Kwon)	Branch Manager
MAERSK GLOBAL SERVICE CENTRES (PHILIPPINES), LTD. 17/F Wynsum Corporate Plaza, Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Rasmus Bermann Teilmann	Head, Value Added Services
NSK LTD. 910 Philippine Axa Life Center, 1286 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Hidemichi Okuda	Chief Representative
QINGTAN WENCHENG MANUFACTURING CORP. 48 Kalakal St., San Rafael Village, Navotas, Metro Manila	Zehong Li	General Manager
SEAFIELD INT'L. FREIGHT SERVICES CORP. Rm. 324 BOC Aduana Bldg., 409 A. Soriano Ave., Intramuros, Manila	Jin Kim (w/o Park)	Director on Operations
CROWN WORLDWIDE MOVERS, INC. 2 Panorama Cpd., Km. 18 Severina Subd., West Svc. Rd., Sucat, Paranaque City	Camilla Alice Brooks	Corporate Services Manager
JNS-KOBE INTERNATIONAL INC. No. 49 4/F A&M Bldg., Comm. Ave. Batasan Hills, Quezon City	Masaaki Hirayama	CEO/Vice President

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–February 14, 2007)

RP told Oriental treatment is better

BAGUIO CITY—THE country's medical industry could reduce its dependence on drugs and medicines if oriental medical practices would become part of the health-care system, a Chinese-Filipino doctor said here.

Dr. Charles Cheng, director of the Baguio Filipino Chinese Hospital, said Asian medical practices, like acupuncture, continue to be ignored by most hospitals since their treatment methods do not appeal to a western-dominated medical society.

Such system, which often called for the issuance of prescriptions, would not help members of indigenous communities who have to travel several kilometers to reach the hospital in the city for medical attention, he said.

Acupuncture

Cheng is a lifetime awardee of the Dr. Jose Rizal Award for Excellence in Medicine and Community Service in 2005. He is also known for his research on the effects of pesticide use on Benguet's vegetable farmers.

His hospital is the only medical institution north of Metro Manila that adopted a policy of combining acupuncture with western medical practices.

"A farmer that would earn P1,000 from selling several kilograms of potatoes would still find his cash short buying those drugs written in various [prescription] sheets," Cheng said.

Flaw

He said a flaw in western medicine is that its approach to human diseases is "mechanical" while oriental medicine tends to be "more philosophical."

He said 80 percent of human illnesses could be cured by simple, less expensive yet effective methods while only 20 percent actually needed state-of-the-art medical treatment.

Since 1972, the Baguio Filipino Chinese Hospital had treated many patients through acupuncture. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

INQUIRER *Northern Luzon*
E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/regions
Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Rolando B. Fernandez**

A love story thru war, poverty, illness

By Ria Salgado-Llanes
Contributor

"YOUR GRANDMOTHER DIED in your *lolo's* arms. It was like a scene from Camelot."

I can never forget these words which my late grand uncle, Rogelio de la Rosa, uttered at a dinner in our home many, many years ago. He was referring to my grandparents, the late President Diosdado Macapagal and Purita de la Rosa.

My *lolo* (grandfather) was present at the dinner and with tears in his eyes, kept silent while Lolo Rod and his wife, Lola Lottie, told my family how much my grandparents loved each other. They said they had not seen a sweeter and more devoted couple.

Not very many know that Diosdado Macapagal, ninth president of the Philippines, was married to my grandmother, Purita de la Rosa (sister of the late movie actors and politicians, Rogelio and Jaime). Their love story is one of the most romantic and touching I have ever known. I never knew my grandmother but my *lolo* loved to tell us about her—how they met, their life together and her legendary beauty.

When my *lolo* was still alive, he gifted me with a journal entitled "Grandfather Remembers: Memories for My Grandchild." In the 65-page journal, which he lovingly completed in his own penmanship, *lolo* wrote about my grandmother.

They were neighbors in Barrio San Nicolas, Lubao, Pampanga. Lola Purita was of Spanish and Chinese descent and her parents were rich. She was not only beautiful but was also extremely kind, patient and generous.

Initially, *lolo*'s friend was the one courting my grandmother. Lolo would accompany his friend when he visited Lola Purita, and even helped him compose love letters. This *lolo* did even though he was also interested in her. However, after some time, *lolo* found out to his pleasant surprise, that Lola Purita had turned down his friend and he was the one she was attracted to.

DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL

PURITA DE LA ROSA CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

'Sweet, kind, pretty'

In the journal, *lolo* wrote that he liked her because "she was sweet, kind and pretty." On the other hand, she found him "gentle, good-looking and promising." They liked to go strolling and to the movies on their dates and were often sentimental about how fate brought them together.

My grandparents both acted in their hometown zarzuelas and played lead roles opposite each other. Rogelio de la Rosa was often the *contravida* (villain). Lola Purita also acted in one movie with Manuel Conde but had to discontinue her acting career because of poor health.

As a young man, my grandfather was most happy when he and my grandmother were together. She so inspired him that he wrote poetry in loving dedication to her. (One of those poems, written in Pampango, is entitled "Chant D'Amour.") Their courtship lasted 10 years or so.

When he asked her to marry him, he told her, "Let us now have our life of our own with God's blessing. I will do my best to make you happy."

Her response was, "You have already made me the happiest woman. I pray I will be deserving of you and make you happy too." They were married on July 4, 1938.

'Sublime feeling'

Lolo thought my grandmother looked like a beauty queen on their wedding day. What *lolo* remembered most about the occasion was, in his words, "my sublime feeling of oneness with my wife as God meant it to be and as we celebrated our wedding together, there was another celebration in the city—American Independence Day."

When they were newlyweds, they lived in a rented house in Sta. Ana, Manila. He worked as an assistant attorney in a law office and was paid P125 a month.

Lola Purita was a good cook and my *lolo* loved her *sinigang*. They neither traveled nor had worldly possessions like a car. However, despite their lack of material wealth, they were happy and contented.

They looked forward to being parents and rejoiced when my mother was born. They named her "Cielo," which means heaven.

Lola Purita became afflicted with a lingering ailment after my uncle, Arthur, was born. Because of the war, medical attention was hard to come by. Lolo took care of his beloved and never left her side. Sadly, Lola Purita passed away three years after my mother was born. She was only 27 years old and died in my *lolo*'s arms. Truly, it was like a scene from a heart-wrenching movie.

In a section of the journal entitled, "Grandmother Would Want You to Know," *lolo* wrote: "I was the person she loved most in the world. She loves you and prays in heaven for your happiness. You have considerable resemblance to her. She is proud of your education the height of which she did not attain. She would be happy if like her, you would love deeply and with fidelity the husband you will have, the children you will bear, your parents, brother and sisters. She wishes you to be of salutary influence to the husband you will marry as she was to me ... like when I was still courting her, when she remarked, 'I hear you still gamble' (the pastime in our street), that was enough for me to stop gambling, which had a salutary effect on my career."

Fate did not give my grandparents the opportunity to spend the rest of their lives together but in the relatively short time they had, they truly loved each other.

Despite the difficult circumstances they encountered—war, poverty, illness—their devotion never waned. Their story is truly inspiring and worth emulating in this day and age.

The author is the eldest grandchild of the late President Diosdado Macapagal and Purita de la Rosa.

Purita de la Rosa died in the arms of her husband, Diosdado Macapagal

Japanese youths learn Pinoy family values

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Sual, Pangasinan

MANY FILIPINOS HAVE given up on the country and have gone abroad for a better life, but a Japanese has found hope in the Philippines.

Akira Futagoishi, 71, has been bringing Japanese youngsters to the Philippines since the 1980s so his young countrymen could learn the Filipinos' values—their being God- and family-centered.

It all started in 1985, said Futagoishi, when he was the secretary-general of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in his hometown of Saitama, Japan.

"I was dealing with 25 school dropouts aged 13-18. They were delinquent children who had done every bad thing except kill a person. I kept them in my house for three years. Their parents [did] not care where they were," he said.

He wrote to YMCA chapters in five countries—Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Thailand, Fiji and Bangladesh—asking them to host the children whom he would bring for a visit.

It was the Philippines, he said, that responded first.

So Futagoishi brought the children to the Philippines and visited the Tala Leprosarium in Caloocan City where they saw "funny people with missing fingers or other body parts."

But the Japanese children were surprised because the families at the leprosarium were intact, with the children taking care of their sick parents, he said.

Money vs family

He said during a session among the Filipino and Japanese children, they were asked, "What is the most important thing to you?"

The Japanese said "money" while the Filipinos said "God, family," he recalled.

"Quite different answers," he said.

The children soon started to talk to each other, touching on topics such as respect for parents, their elders and teachers and spirituality.

"After two weeks of exposure to Filipino children, the Japanese children changed a lot," Futagoishi said.

"They said they felt foolish being money-oriented. Now, those 'bad' children have grown up to be responsible adults, becoming doctors, teachers, and others," he said.

Community spirit

Every year since then, Futagoishi has been bringing a group of Japanese children to learn Filipino values.

He accompanied several groups to Barangay Canan in Malasiqui, Pangasinan, from 1988 to 1990 where the Japanese children stayed for two to three weeks with families in the village.

Josefina Geslani Tamondong, whose late husband Celso Lolarga was a board member of the Pangasinan YMCA, hosted Futagoishi and some children at that time.

Tamondong said the children were initially quiet and would hardly answer in a conversation.

"But after a while, they began to get acquainted with their Filipino counterparts and become gregarious," she said.

Tamondong said the community also gained from the visits, as their sense of community was revitalized.

"They were united in welcoming the Japanese by preparing different activities like mothers' classes and cultural presentations," she said.

She related an incident when Futagoishi asked an elderly man to recount to the Japanese teenagers his experiences during World War II at the hands of the Japanese Imperial Army.

The old man recoiled, saying it was embarrassing to discuss the cruelties of the Japanese soldiers in front of the visitors. But Futagoishi urged him to talk, saying the young students should learn that "war is not good."

After the old man's narration, the Japanese and the Filipino children held and kissed each other, he said.

God's little nook

Futagoishi and the YMCA founded the Caring for the Future Foundation (CFF), which runs a facility for street children in a hilly, tree-filled compound overlooking the Lingayen Gulf in Barangay Baquioen in Sual town. Fifteen Filipino street children are housed at the 2.6-hectare compound.

Futagoishi brought a group of campers to the area and later found people willing to sell the land to the foundation.

The facility was opened in 1998 to provide a home for abandoned, neglected or abused children and provide them with basic necessities like food, shelter, clothing and education.

It promotes physical, mental, social and spiritual welfare and development of the children.

"It is God's little nook," Tamondong said.

Futagoishi said the beauty of nature helps heal the children who are "wounded in the heart."

The CFF compound also doubles as a summer camp for Japanese children whom Futagoishi brings to the country yearly.

"The [facility's] concept is the same—for the Japanese children to learn Filipino spiritual values," Akira said.

But now, instead of going to different places in the Philippines, they stay at the compound. The CFF in Japan is in charge of the tours to the Philippines.

Futagoishi said the compound was established "to give back" to Filipino children the help they have extended to the Japanese.

He said they were encouraging the Japanese "graduates" of the program to do something to help in return, and they have been helping the foundation financially.

Lourdes Abarabar, CFF administrator, said the visitors stay from two to three weeks and spend between P290 and P500 daily for food and accommodation.

"But they work around the place, [and this is] something they really enjoy," Abarabar said.

"They build roads, riprap walls, plant trees. They would do anything and they love it," she said. A group arriving this month, she said, will be painting the walls of an open conference hall near the cottages.

Adorning a carved wall of a hill in the compound are names of the Japanese visitors and the dates when they camped there. Since the facility opened, 46 groups have been accommodated in the area.

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NBI says judges, justices are at risk

Bureau signs MOA on judicial security with Supreme Court

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI), the country's premier investigation agency, disclosed yesterday the presence of a "clear and present danger" to the judiciary following the assassinations of 13 judges since 1999.

In view of this threat, the NBI recommended the creation of the Task Force Judiciary Protection (TFJP).

The NBI, headed by Director Nestor Mantaring, noted that only 30 percent of the incidents of assassination had been solved.

Mantaring and Supreme Court Administrator Christopher O. Lock signed on Monday a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on judicial security. It was aimed at protecting judges and justices from threats to their personal safety arising from their judicial work.

For his part, Chief Justice Reynato Puno has lamented that "the one who grants justice cannot get justice." His own brother, former Manila City Judge Isaac Puno Jr., was brutally killed 30 years ago by still unidentified suspects.

NBI Field Operations Division (FOD) chief Rolando Argabioso, who was among those who conducted the study on judicial security and risk assessment, said the alarming number of killings prompted them to make an urgent call for the creation of the task force that will be comprised of NBI personnel who will provide protection to judges and justices fearing for their personal safety due to work-related threats. The most recent victim of judicial killings was Judge Nathaniel C. Pattugalan, who was shot to death Jan. 19 200 meters from his sala at the Quezon City Hall of Justice.

Under the agreement, the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) will provide equipment and facilities such as bulletproof vests, remote video cameras and other surveillance gadgets to bureau operatives. The OCA and the NBI will also work on passing an enabling law to make the TFJP a permanent office within the bureau.

200 couples to tie knot in Muntinlupa

By Julie M. Aurelio

ROMANCE IS FOREVER FOR TWO senior citizens who will tie the knot today along with 200 other couples in Muntinlupa City today.

Taking part in the mass wedding ceremony are Feliciano Genovi, 73 and Epigenia Pizarfro, 66, longtime sweethearts and residents of Muntinlupa City.

The city government will sponsor the free nuptial rites to be officiated by Mayor Jaime Fresnedi.

White doves, too

Community Affairs Office head Silverio Taloma said the brides and grooms will also celebrate the occasion with a wedding cake, wine, gifts and white doves courtesy of the local government.

Now on its 17th year, the mass wedding rites are usually held during February and December of each year.

.Over 30,000 couples have been married since Fresnedi began the program in 1999.

Special awards will be given for the best-dressed couple, birthday celebrants and "early bird" participants.

MUST LOVE DOGS: Dr. May Javier with (from left) Rudolph Santiago with blood donor Dave and Arminda and Ramon Santiago with recuperating DJ. ROGER CARPIO

Two dogs become blood brothers—literally

By Marlet D. Salazar

DJ WAS ALMOST COMATOSE. HE WAS GIVEN a 50-50 chance to survive.

In another room was the usually tough Dave, who was being readied for blood extraction. His blood would go to DJ.

The scene may not seem unusual but, in this instance, both blood donor and recipient are dogs.

In November, DJ, a mongrel, developed tick paralysis (tick toxicosis). His guardian, Arminda Santiago, was about to take him and his sister Sparky for a walk when she heard him make sounds like he was hurt.

She saw DJ lying flat in their holding pen. DJ's cries of frustration echoed in the house.

Santiago immediately brought DJ to her veterinarian, Dr. May Javier, on Visayas Avenue, Quezon City. DJ, short for Dominoes Jr., was extremely pale, his red blood cell count much lower than his white blood cell rate.

"Tick paralysis ... is believed to be due to toxins in the tick's saliva that enters the bloodstream when the tick is feeding," the vet told her. "The symptoms include weakening of both legs that eventually progresses into paralysis. The paralysis ascends to the trunk, arms, and head within hours and may lead to respiratory failure and death."

Though DJ's condition stabilized, Dr. Javier was not sure he was completely out of danger.

Santiago, an associate professor at the University of the Philippines Film Institute and chair of the Graduate Studies Department of College of Mass Communications, left for school leaving the dog in the clinic.

A friend of Javier's, Dr. Francis Pilapil, noticed DJ's condition, and immediately suggested a blood transfusion. When Santiago returned, the two vets told her about their plan. But they stressed that the dog's chances of survival, even with blood transfusion, were still slim. The pooch was already 12 years old, his resistance was weaker, probably one reason he contracted paralysis.

Santiago was in a dilemma. DJ was one of her "babies." She and her husband did not have children so the dogs, and her cats, meant a lot to her.

Pilapil convinced Santiago to let DJ have the blood transfusion. "DJ is fighting for you," he said, citing the twitching of the dog's front paw when he heard his guardian arrive. "But I don't want to play God," Santiago said.

Survival chances

Pilapil replied, "Aren't you also playing God if you don't give him the chance to at least try?" "Dr. Pilapil didn't even talk of chances of surviving but of the right to fight for his life," she added. Santiago eventually gave in, but finding a donor was not easy.

According to Javier, initially, a blood transfusion for dogs did not need cross-matching as the blood was only used as replenishment. But if an animal rejected the blood or if it was not enough, cross-matching was necessary in the second transfusion.

Seeing Santiago agonize, Javier, her longtime friend, offered the blood of her own dog. Despite her distress, Santiago chuckled when she saw that the would-be donor was a mini pinscher.

She then checked if their native dog, Pampoo, could be a donor. But Pampoo also had ticks and fleas. Then Santiago remembered that her brother-in-law had a German Shepherd named Dave.

Santiago's husband, Mon, fetched Dave in Tondo, Manila. Pilapil immediately sedated Dave and took about 300 cc of blood from the German Shepherd.

The usually tough and hard-to-handle Dave seemed an unlikely donor but his blood proved to be the perfect match, and saved the life of another dog. Dave was still groggy from the sedative when he was brought home.

As soon as the transfusion was over, DJ

TWO DOGS/ A25

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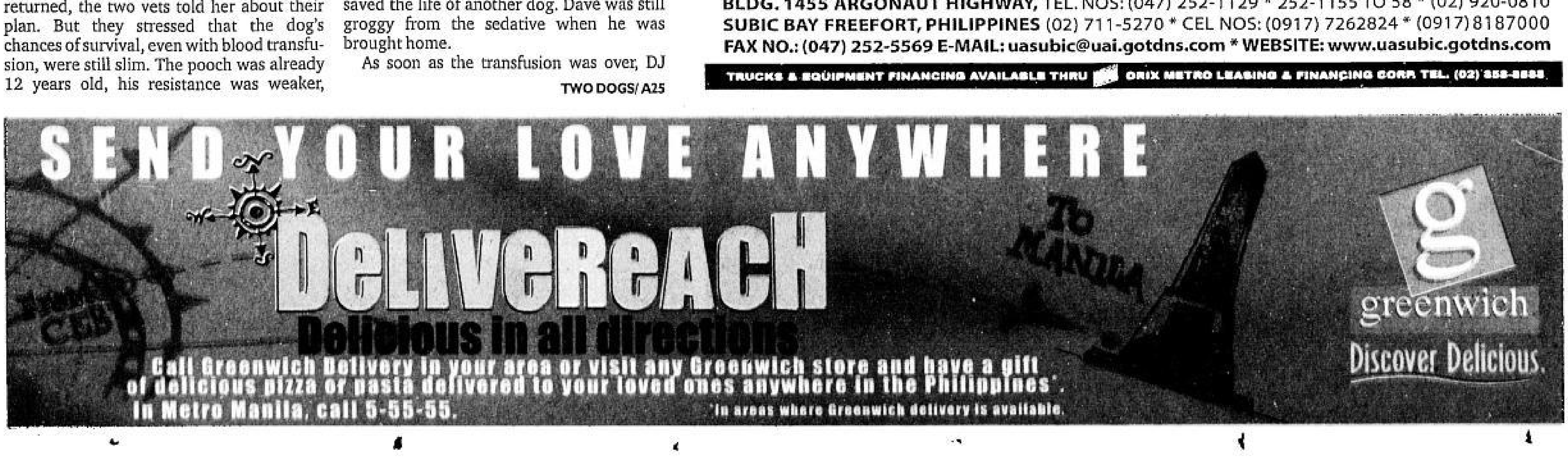

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'Short-time' can lead to yearlong jail term

By Tina G. Santos and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

LOVERS, BE WARNED!

A three-hour stay in Manila's motels and inns today may mean a year's stay in jail, but not necessarily together.

Senior Supt. Danilo Abarzosa, acting chief of the Manila Police District, said they would keep a close watch over motels and inns in the city to ensure that the prohibition on what was known as "short-time" was strictly enforced.

Motels and inns are expected to be fully booked today, as lovers and couples celebrate Valentine's Day.

Abarzosa said they were strictly enforcing Ordinance 7774, otherwise known as the "Ordinance Prohibiting Short-Time Admission."

The ordinance was signed into law by Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim on Nov. 10, 1992, when he launched a campaign to rid the city of its "sin city" image.

Violators of the ordinance face imprisonment of not more than a year or a fine, or both. Both motel owners and clients face prosecution.

The police chief said policemen would particularly be on the lookout for minors and students.

"The ordinance was aimed at protecting young people from immoral activities and illicit sex," he said. He added that his men would patrol areas where motels abound.

Under the city ordinance, the shortest stay allowed was 12 hours.

Abarzosa warned that those found trying a "quickie" in a dark part of a park or any other public place would also be arrested.

He said policemen would be deployed in parks and public places.

These include movie houses, the popular Rizal Park, private vehicles, abandoned buildings, and the Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard.

Meanwhile, the Pasig City Traffic and Parking Management Office (TPMO) will deploy more traffic enforcers on key streets in the city this morning.

City officials are gearing up for slightly heavier than usual vehicular traffic today, Valentine's Day.

Many couples are expected to troop to restaurants, parks and motels to celebrate the occasion.

TPMO deputy chief for enforcement and operations Phillip Reyes told the INQUIRER they would double the number of traffic enforcers on Canley and Henry Javier Roads, as well as on Hillcrest Drive in Barangay Oranbo.

About six motels are located on these intersections, which also leads to the usually congested Shaw Boulevard.

Additional men

"We will have more traffic enforcers in these areas for monitoring," Reyes also said.

He reminded motorists that the city had not been implementing the number coding scheme, unlike other cities in the metropolis.

Traffic is also expected to be snail-paced this morning on parts of Marcos Highway near the Light Railway Transit Line 2 Santolan Station.

Transport groups are planning to hold a small protest action from morning to noon, Reyes also said.

DID YOU KNOW

THE NATIONAL Institutes of Health was created on Feb. 13, 1998 by Republic Act No. 8503 as a center for excellence for health research and development. It was established at the government-run University of the Philippines in Manila. The NIH is also the coordinating body of existing research institutes in the said university.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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INQUIRER

Cheap but risky option for daring couples

By Emman Cena

FROM THE LOOKS OF IT, SHOPping malls may have become the cheapest option for amorous couples this love month.

But it can be risky business.

On at least three different occasions since the start of February, policemen have arrested three couples in the rest rooms for males at a plush mall along Edsa in Mandaluyong City, allegedly engaged in "scandalous acts."

Caught

Police chief Supt. Jaime Masilang said the persons apprehended are facing grave scandal charges filed against them by the mall management.

The incidents were reported by roving security guards detailed at various levels of the shopping mall.

Incidents

Police records showed that the most recent incident occurred on Feb. 11 when two minors, both males, aged 17, were seen cuddling and caressing each other's private parts.

Meanwhile, two middle-aged men were also apprehended on the same day at Level 4 of the mall at about 7:25 p.m. inside one of the cubicles of the rest room.

Jovon Banzo, of the Safeguard Armor Security Corporation, identified the suspects who were caught red-handed as Wilson Ching, 40, a businessman.

His partner was identified as as Eduardo Silbol, 42, a fashion designer and resident of Western Bicutan in Taguig.

Behavior

On Feb 5, watchmen also arrested Rodrigo Reyes and Nocelito Pasia for scandalous behavior inside the mall at past 4 p.m.

Police are also looking into the possibility of a male prostitution ring operating in the area since most of the cases involved men.

Lim libel hearing vs Inquirer writers set today

By Tina G. Santos

FOR CALLING HIM A "BEDBUG," a top official of the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) has filed a libel suit against Philippine Daily Inquirer sports editor Teddyvic Melendres and columnist Recah Trinidad.

Graham Lim, BAP secretary general, filed the complaint against the respondents over Trinidad's Jan. 10 Bare Eye column titled "Fiba falls in love with a bedbug."

The article narrated a conversation between Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and a group of reporters over Lim being "a problem" in the national basketball community.

In his complaint, Lim claimed that Trinidad's article was "inherently malicious" as it called him "a bedbug which infests beds and sucks blood," adding that the item "imputes graft, corruption, embezzlement, bribery and various violations of the law against me."

There was even a threat of assassination, Lim claimed, referring to the part when Estrada read the text message: "The best solution is assassination" after he was asked by the reporters what he planned to do with Lim.

"These malicious imputations certainly caused (me) dishonor, discredit and contempt," Lim said, adding that he suffered anxiety, fear, embarrassment, ridicule and public humiliation.

The hearing for the preliminary investigation of the complaint was scheduled today by Manila Assistant City Prosecutor Gideon Mendoza.

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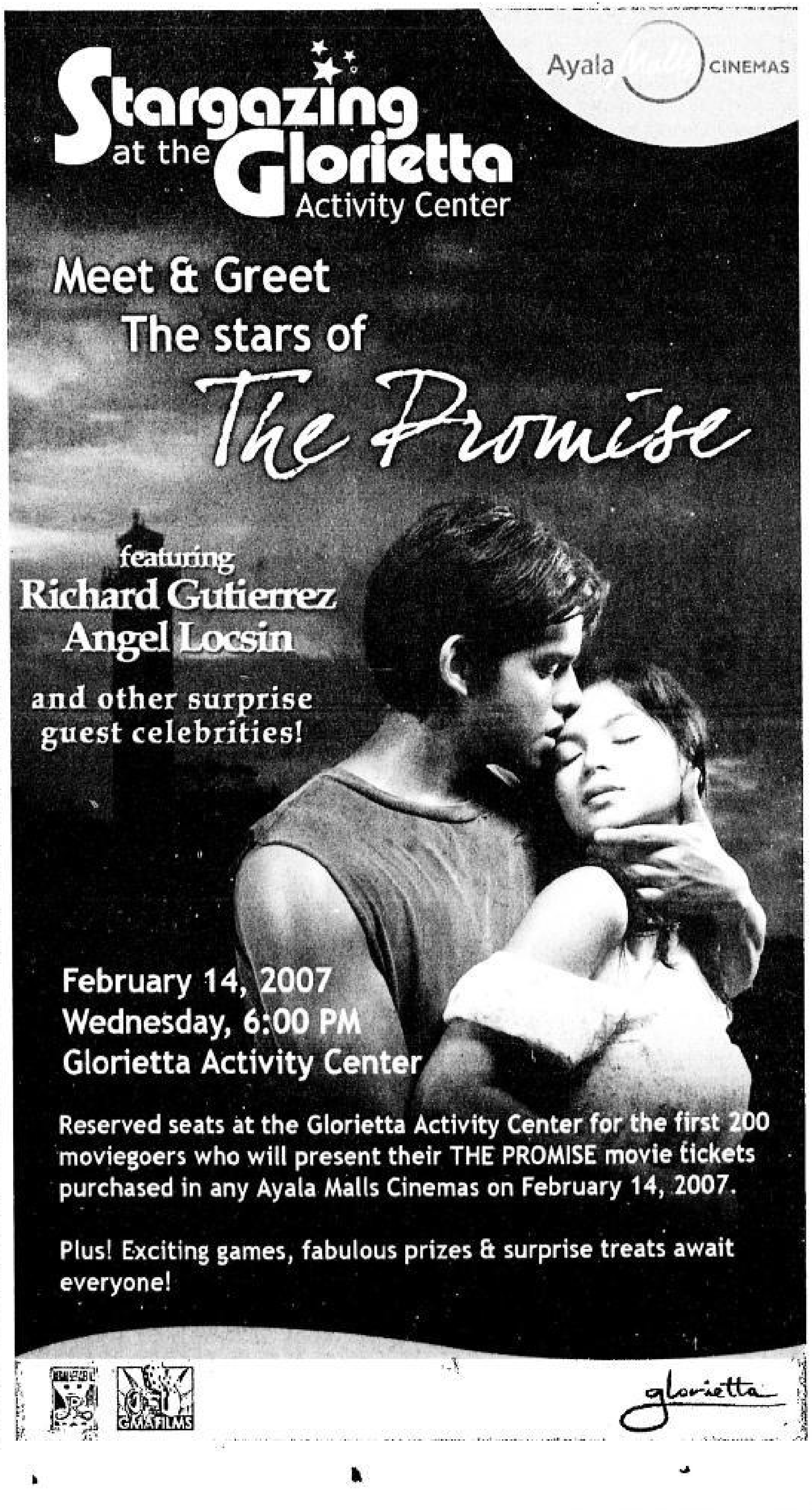
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Two dogs …

From page A23

was also brought home by Santiago's husband in the early hours of the morning.

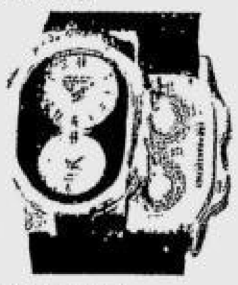
Santiago woke up the next day to find Mon beside DJ on the floor.

The days following, they fed DJ water and milk. He was also given vitamins to strengthen his stamina. DJ took his medicines without protest. Santiago's other two dogs, Sparky and Shadow, would occasionally visit DJ. Santiago said they seemed to realize their playmate needed special attention.

The dog continued to get better. Though DJ was no longer his old self, he was not as sick as before.

What impressed his doctors and what could have helped speed up his recovery, was DJ's will to live. Javier and Pilapil ruled out euthanasia because the dog showed signs he was not about to stop struggling to regain his ability to move.

As DJ now wobbles around the hallway of the UP College of Mass Communication, nobody realizes what he went through the last two months. They only see a cute dog accompanying his guardian, barking occasionally at strangers, as she walks around the building.



FEEL IT: The Calming, Beneficial TESLAR Effect

Several independent studies show that more people are discovering the wonderful, beneficial TESLAR effect when wearing Philip Stein TESLAR watches.

The TESLAR Effect may result in "improved cardiovascular fitness"
In 2005, a Heart-Rate Variability study (i.e., Stress Test) published in Explore! Magazine suggests TESLAR wearers may experience a more balanced Autonomic Nervous System related to cardiovascular fitness. Measurements suggest after wearing TESLAR, test subjects experienced improved general cardiovascular fitness related to (1) relaxing the "fight or flight" response; (2) increasing "relaxation response", and, (3) improving adaptability to external stress.

The TESLAR Effect may "help compensate for some of the negative impact of using a cell phone".
In June 2002, Alternative Medicine Magazine conducted independent product testing which demonstrated that TESLAR may have a positive effect on the human body in the presence of a cell phone. This test measured Heart Rate Variability (HRV), which can be a good measurement of a body's overall response to external stress. This product test concluded that the use of TESLAR "may in fact compensate for some of the negative impact of using a cell phone."

In 2003, Dr. Nyjon Eccles, MD, saw similar results on patients. Dr. Eccles' HRV tests showed that without TESLAR, the nervous system can become stressed when exposed to an energized cell phone. While wearing TESLAR, results suggest a "stabilizing effect" on or even "beneficial stimulation" of nervous system activity.

Immune cell production increases in presence of the TESLAR Effect in laboratory experiment
Dr. Glen Rein, while at Stanford Medical School, showed that in the presence of TESLAR there was, on average, 137% enhancement of human immune cell growth (in-vitro). A separate test demonstrated that nerve cells (in-vitro) could inhibit their uptake of noradrenalin (a depression-fighting process) by as much as 19.5% in the presence of TESLAR.

Children wearing TESLAR showed improved concentration
In 2001, a 30-day study of 11 children with hyperactivity and attention problems was completed in Henderson, KY. Students were evaluated by teachers prior to beginning the study and again at the conclusion. Overall, per teachers' observations, students showed improvements in their ability to concentrate, play respectfully with other children, relate to adults, and respect authority, among other indicators.

The TESLAR technology is a beneficial effect of the TESLAR chip, the revolutionary chip found inside Philip Stein TESLAR watches. It was engineered to strengthen the body's natural electromagnetic energy field or biofield to protect the body from the possible hazards of external extremely low electromagnetic fields (EMF) produced by cell phones, computers and other electronic devices.

As a result of the TESLAR effect, past wearers of Philip Stein TESLAR timepieces have experienced deeper, more restful sleep; more calm and less tension in normally stressful situations; improved concentration; increased levels of energy; and an overall improvement in wellbeing.

[illegible]

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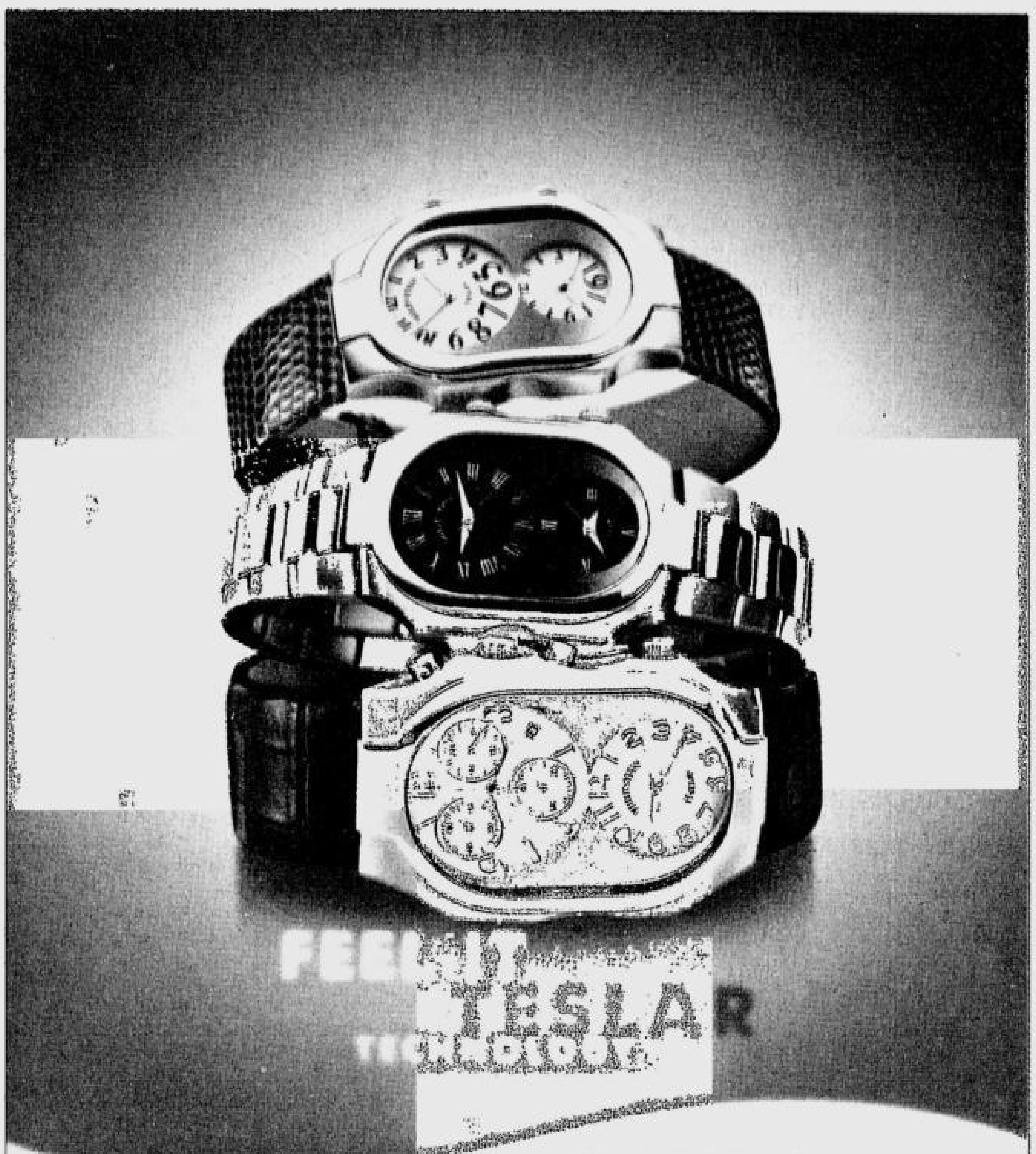

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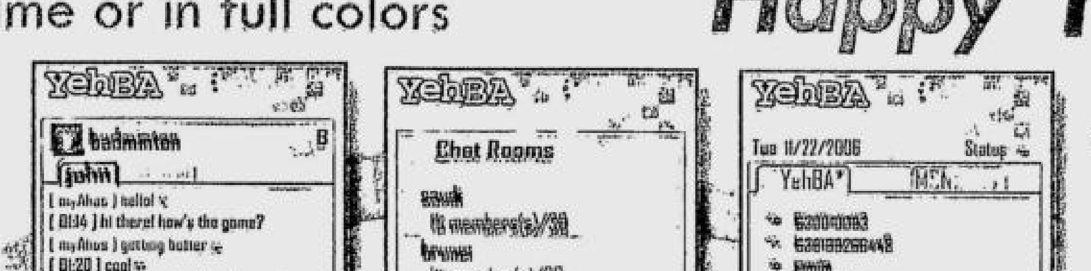

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Australian PM faces storm after criticizing Obama

HOWARD

OBAMA

SYDNEY—AUSTRALIAN PRIME Minister John Howard found himself at the center of a political storm Monday after criticizing US presidential hopeful Barack Obama over his plans to pull troops from Iraq.

The conservative leader earned a stinging rebuke from the popular Democratic senator and other US politicians, and faced a censure motion by the opposition in his own parliament.

Howard, a close ally of US President George W. Bush, sparked the dispute on Sunday when he said Obama's plan to get US troops out of Iraq by March 31 next year would seal a US defeat and be welcomed as a victory by terrorists.

"If I were running Al-Qaida in Iraq, I would put a circle around March 2008 and be praying as many times as possible for a victory not only for Obama but also for the Democrats," Howard told commercial television.

The Democratic Party's bright new hope reacted sharply to Howard's comments, scornfully suggesting that if the Australian leader was so keen on the Iraq war he should send in more troops.

"We have close to 140,000 troops on the ground now, and my understanding is Mr Howard has deployed 1,400, so if he is (ready) to fight the good fight in Iraq, I would suggest that he calls up another 20,000 Australians and sends them to Iraq.

"Otherwise, it's just a bunch of empty rhetoric," Obama, 45, told reporters.

The 67-year-old Howard, who has been in power for nearly 11 years, fired back on Monday, saying the Australian deployment was a "very significant and appropriate contribution" given the country's population of just 20 million.

"I think the most interesting thing about (Obama's comments) is that it didn't really address the substance of the issue," Howard told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

But during question time in parliament later, Howard was given a rough ride by the new Labor Party opposition leader Kevin Rudd, who said his comments had endangered the future of Australia's alliance with the US.

Rudd charged that Howard had accused the Democratic Party in the US of being "the terrorists' party of choice." Pointing out that the Democrats control the US Congress and could win the White House next year, Rudd described Howard's comments as "a grave mistake" and called on him to withdraw them.

When Howard refused, Rudd moved a motion to censure the prime minister, launching a major attack on his Iraq policy as "the greatest single foreign policy and national security disaster this country has seen since Vietnam." Howard's Liberal-National coalition has a strong majority in parliament and the motion was defeated by 82 votes to 60, but not before the veteran leader was made to look unusually uncomfortable and defensive.

"I was not generically attacking the Democrats, but the last time I checked, Senator Obama was a member of the Democratic Party of the United States," he said.

"I don't apologize for criticizing Senator Obama's observation because I thought what he said was wrong.

"If America is defeated in Iraq, the consequences for the West will be catastrophic." Howard's discomfort was worsened by reports in local media that his remarks had been dismissed by Democrats in the US as "bizarre" and that even some Republican senators had criticized him for interfering in US domestic affairs.

The grilling in parliament also came just hours after the latest opinion poll showed that Rudd has overtaken Howard as the preferred prime minister.

Rudd has breathed new life into the left-of-center opposition since he was installed in December as Labor's candidate to face off against Howard in elections due by the end of the year.

Howard will be standing for his fifth term. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Lebanon blasts

AIN ALAK, Lebanon—Explosions ripped through two buses in Lebanon on Tuesday, killing 12 people as the deeply divided nation prepared to commemorate the assassination of ex-premier Rafiq Hariri two years ago. The cause of the explosions was not immediately clear. "The explosion took place at 9:30 a.m. in a minibus... full of passengers and seven minutes later another explosion ripped through a second nearby minibus," the state news agency said. "Twelve people were killed and 10 others wounded," it said. Many vehicles were also damaged in the twin blasts in the village of Ain Alak in the foothills northeast of Beirut, a largely Christian area in multiconfessional Lebanon. *AFP*

US base explosion

TOKYO—A small explosion was heard near a US military base in Japan but there were no injuries or damage, Japanese police and US military spokespersons said on Tuesday. Police who searched the area near the US Army's Camp Zama base near Tokyo found two pipes in a park about 300 meters from the base, the police spokesperson said, adding that they were investigating the incident. "Whatever happened off base, there was no damage to any property in the installation and no injuries to US service members," said US Air Force Captain Jason Medina, a spokesperson for US Forces, Japan. "Japanese police are handling the investigation," he said. Reuters

Death for ex-Iraq VP

BAGHDAD—The Iraqi High Court ruled on Monday that Saddam Hussein's former vice president should follow him to the gallows, despite appeals from UN officials and international human rights groups for his life to be spared. "I swear by God almighty that I am innocent and he will take revenge on everyone who oppressed me," Taha Yassin Ramadan said after he was sentenced to death by hanging for his role in the killing of 148 Shiites in the town of Dujail in the 1980s. Ramadan was sentenced in November to life in jail for the killings, for which Saddam and two former aides have already been hanged. But an appeals court recommended that he receive the death penalty and referred the case back to the trial court. *Reuters*

Somalis flee capital

MOGADISHU—Hundreds of people fled the Somali capital Mogadishu on Monday after two people were killed in a barrage of rocket attacks and guerrilla-style raids, which authorities here blamed on Islamists who were driven from power last December. Heavy shelling, which began in the early hours of Monday, resumed in the late evening in several Mogadishu neighborhoods, including near the Villa Somalia residence of President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed in the south of the city, an AFP reporter said. At least two people were killed in the early attacks that demolished residential houses, while at least one person was injured in the latest onslaught, according to witnesses. *AFP*

Iran slams US

TEHRAN—Iran on Monday angrily dismissed as "baseless" US charges it was arming Shiite militias in Iraq, with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad warning any attack on his country "would be severely punished." In a rare interview with the US media given amid mounting tensions with the Islamic republic's arch-enemy in Washington, Ahmadinejad told ABC television that he did not fear a US attack. "Fear? Why should we be afraid? First, the possibility is very low," he said the day after the United States accused Iranian agents of smuggling armor-piercing bombs into war-torn Iraq. "Our nation has made it clear that anyone who wants to attack our country will be severely punished," Ahmadinejad added. *AFP*

Key differences resolved in N.Korea nuclear talks

BEIJING—SIX-PARTY TALKS ON North Korea's nuclear arms program early on Tuesday settled key differences that had blocked a draft disarmament deal, leaving the potential agreement needing approval from the countries' capitals.

The nuclear talks in Beijing have focused on how to begin implementing a September 2005 agreement that promised North Korea aid and security assurances in return for nuclear disarmament.

Negotiations appeared stuck on North Korea's demands for a huge influx of energy aid. But intense discussions from Monday brought a breakthrough that could land a formal agreement later on Tuesday.

"There was an agreement on the key differences of North Korea's actions for denuclearization, their scope and how far they'll go, and the other countries' corresponding measures and the scale of assistance," South Korean envoy Chun Yung-woo told reporters.

"North Korea basically agreed to all the measures in the draft."

The draft agreement now needed the green light from respective capitals, the US envoy Christopher Hill said.

"When you put out a final draft, you're expectation is that you've met everyone's concerns," he said.

"Now it will be up to the Chinese to get formal approval from the different delegations. I think the Chinese will certainly be up to that task."

The proposed plan will be only the first step in what Hill has called a step-by-step process of locating and dismantling North Korea's nuclear weapons activities, which culminated in its first nuclear test blast in October.

"This is only one phase of denuclearization. We're not done," said Hill.

But there is a gulf of distrust that divides the isolated North from other countries in the talks, especially the United States, and diplomats have stressed that even this initial disarmament action could founder.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Qin Gang told reporters the six sides had held "extraordinarily intensive consultations. *Reuters*

CANINE NUPTIAL
TWO DOGS who had just been "married" pose for pictures in Hong Kong Feb. 13 . A shopping mall held a mass wedding ceremony for pets on the eve of Valentine's Day combining Chinese and Western traditions with the dogs walking down a red carpet and making an oath of marriage by stamping paw prints on a wedding certificate.
AFP

POJAMAN
AFP

Thaksin's wife faces tax raps

BANGKOK—AN ANTICORRUPTION panel set up by Thailand's junta recommended Monday that prosecutors file criminal charges of tax evasion against the wife of ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

The charges are unrelated to the controversial sale of telecom giant Shin Corp, which was founded by Thaksin and sold to Singapore's state-linked Temasek Holdings a year ago, sparking angry protests over alleged corruption.

The tax evasion charges stem from a 1997 deal in which Pojaman Shinawatra and her brother, Banpot Damapong, sold shares in the family's Shinawatra Computer and Communication, which later became Shin Corp.

The recommendation to prosecute Pojaman, as well as her brother, is the first decision taken by the high-powered panel that was set up just days after the military seized power in September with its anticorruption agenda.

"We recommend that both be charged in the case. They could face from three months to seven years in prison, or fines of 200,000 baht ($5,750)," or both prison sentences and a fine, said Nam Yimyaem, the head of the Assets Examination Committee.

"The case is set to go to prosecutors within the week to begin court proceedings," he added. *AFP*

Study suggests possible bird flu immunity

WASHINGTON—COULD SOME people have a little immunity to the H5N1 bird flu virus? One study in mice published on Monday suggests it is, in theory, possible.

They found mice inoculated with a human virus known as H1N1 were less likely to die when they were infected with a little bit of H5N1—although this protection went away after a bigger dose of H5N1.

The finding suggests it is possible that some people previously infected with or vaccinated against flu may have a slight protection from H5N1, the researchers wrote in the Public Library of Science journal PLoS Medicine.

"It is weak protection," said Richard Webby at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. "It is not protection from infection—it is protection from death."

Researchers have wondered if people who have been infected with one strain of influenza might have partial immunity to another strain. They know no one has complete immunity, because flu can infect the same person over and over again.

But maybe there is just enough there to keep the new infection from being deadly.

"The idea has been thrown around for a while and we just decided to actually test it," Webby said in a telephone interview.

The H5N1 avian influenza virus has infected 272 people since 2003 and killed 166 of them. Researchers worry it could mutate into a form that would spread around the world and kill millions of people.

No human has immunity to H5N1 as far as anyone knows.

It is possible, Webby's team wrote, that some people have been infected with H5N1 and never became seriously ill because they have some natural immunity. So far, the virus has killed 60 percent of those known to have been infected.

This could explain why 90 percent of H5N1 victims have been under 40, the researchers said. Older people may have some immunity from earlier influenza infection, although there is no proof of this and there are other explanations for why younger people are more likely to be infected or diagnosed.

There are hundreds of different influenza strains, known by their "H" and "N" designations.

The H refers to hemagglutinin, the protein that the flu virus uses to get into cells, and the N refers to neuraminidase, which it uses to get back out of infected cells and spread to others.

What is most different about H5N1 flu is the H5 part.

People have been catching H1N1 flu since at least 1918, when the worst-ever-documented influenza pandemic killed at least 50 million people globally.

A much less dangerous descendant of H1N1 circulates today, and is part of the annual seasonal flu vaccine.

So the question was whether having immunity to N1, either from natural infection or the vaccine, might help protect people from the worst effects of H5N1.

"Antibodies to the human version of the N1 do cross-react to some extent with the H5N1," Webby said.

The match is not perfect, because influenza viruses mutate constantly and the N1 in human seasonal flu looks substantially different from the N1 in H5N1 avian flu.

Webby's team vaccinated mice against human N1 and then exposed them to various flu viruses.

Five out of 10 mice infected with a small dose of the full H5N1 virus lived, although all the mice infected with a big dose of H5N1 died.

They also tested human blood samples against two strains of H5N1 from human victims and found eight out of 38 had antibodies that reacted to one strain, and nine of 38 responded to the other.

Vaccines against seasonal flu focus on the "H" part of the virus, because they are meant to block infection completely. It is not clear how much "N" component current vaccines have, Webby said. *Reuters*

Guinea declares martial law

CONAKRY—GUINEAN PRESIDENT Lansana Conte declared martial law in the West African country on Monday after unions resumed a general strike against his 23-year rule and at least nine people were killed in violent protests.

"Given the destruction and the losses in terms of human life, I have decided to decree martial law in the whole of the national territory," Conte told state radio, saying the measure would last until Feb. 23.

The crackdown, which imposes a strict curfew and allows the military to arrest anyone threatening state security, was declared after machete-wielding youths rampaged through several major towns, including the capital Conakry.

Monday's protests also disrupted the mining and export of bauxite from Guinea, the world's leading exporter of the ore from which aluminum is extracted.

More than 110 people have died since early January in union-led protests against Conte, a reclusive, chain-smoking diabetic in his 70s who seized power in an army coup.

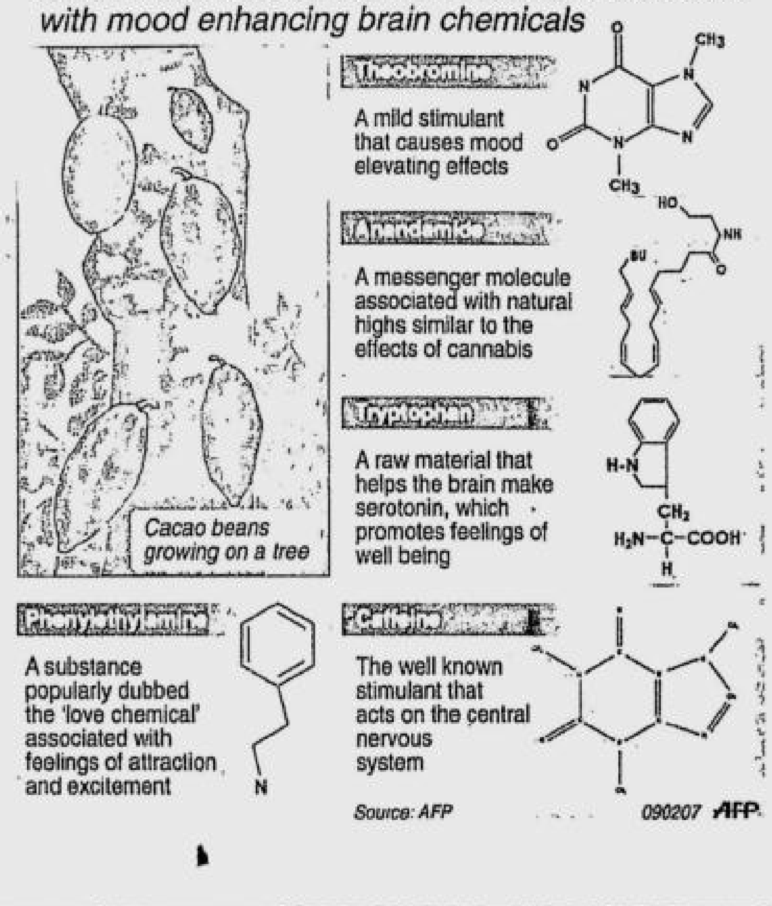
"Orders have been given to the heads of the armed forces to take all appropriate measures to defend the people of Guinea from the risk of civil war," Conte said.

Martial law in Guinea forbids all public meetings and empowers the military to censor newspapers and all radio and television broadcasts. The army can also monitor private communications, such as telephone calls, faxes and e-mails.

Unions resumed the nationwide stoppage because Conte named a close ally, Eugene Camara, as prime minister on Friday.

Union leaders said this violated a power-sharing deal to end an 18-day strike last month which left more than 90 people dead and tested Conte's grip on power.

"We sincerely hope the president will name a prime minister who suits the people," union negotiator Boubacar Biro Barry told Reuters before Conte's announcement. *Reuters*


Chemical secrets of chocolate
Several substances found in chocolate are linked with mood enhancing brain chemicals
Cacao beans growing on a tree
Theobromine
A mild stimulant that causes mood elevating effects
Anandamide
A messenger molecule associated with natural highs similar to the effects of cannabis
Tryptophan
A raw material that helps the brain make serotonin, which promotes feelings of well being
Phenylethylamine
A substance popularly dubbed the 'love chemical' associated with feelings of attraction and excitement
Caffeine
The well known stimulant that acts on the central nervous system
O
N
CH3
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CH2
H2N-C-COOH
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Source: AFP
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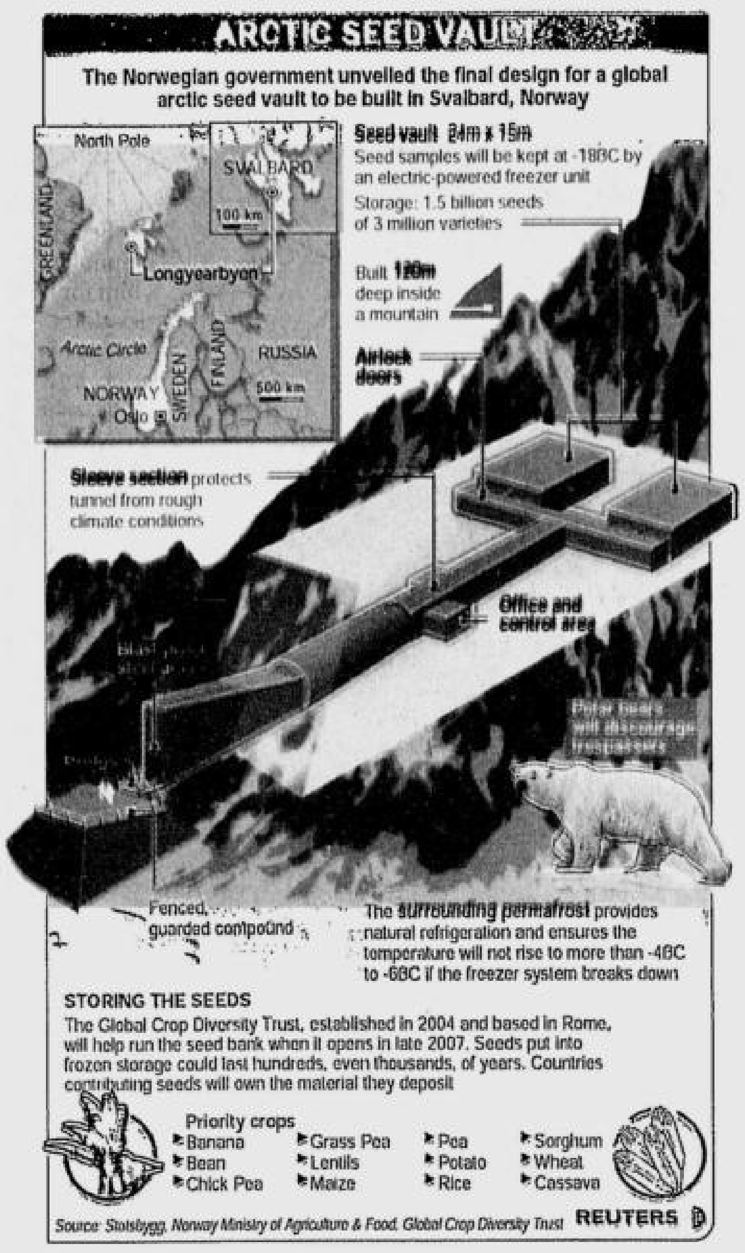
The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco


ARCTIC SEED VAULT
The Norwegian government unveiled the final design for a global arctic seed vault to be built in Svalbard, Norway
North Pole
GREENLAND
SVALBARD
100 km
Longyearbyen
Arctic Circle
NORWAY
Oslo
SWEDEN
FINLAND
RUSSIA
500 km
Seed vault 24m x 15m
Seed samples will be kept at -18BC by an electric-powered freezer unit
Storage: 1.5 billion seeds of 3 million varieties
Built 120m deep inside a mountain
Airlock doors
Sleeve section protects tunnel from rough climate conditions
Office and control area
Polar bears will discourage trespassers
Fenced, guarded compound
The surrounding permafrost provides natural refrigeration and ensures the temperature will not rise to more than -40C to -60C if the freezer system breaks down

STORING THE SEEDS

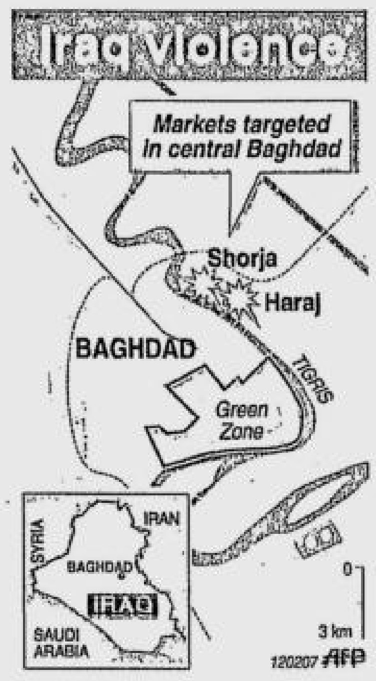
The Global Crop Diversity Trust, established in 2004 and based in Rome, will help run the seed bank when it opens in late 2007. Seeds put into frozen storage could last hundreds, even thousands, of years. Countries contributing seeds will own the material they deposit

Priority crops
- Banana
- Bean
- Chick Pea
- Grass Pea
- Lentils
- Maize
- Pea
- Potato
- Rice
- Sorghum
- Wheat
- Cassava

Source: Statsbygg, Norway Ministry of Agriculture & Food, Global Crop Diversity Trust REUTERS

Bomb attacks kill 95 in Iraq in just 2 days

BAGHDAD—DEVASTATING BOMB ATTACKS ripped through two popular central Baghdad markets on Monday, killing at least 79 people in a lethal response to the Iraqi government's latest security plan.



The blasts were timed to mark the end of a national 15-minute silence called by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki on the first anniversary of the demolition of a Shiite shrine by Sunni bombers that unleashed a wave of sectarian attacks.

Another car bomb rocked central Baghdad on Tuesday.

A suicide bomber detonated a van packed with explosives in a crowd outside a food warehouse in the mixed west Baghdad district of Iskan, killing at least 16 people and wounding 40, a security official told AFP.

Monday's bombers struck Shiite districts in the heart of the capital on a day when Maliki's security forces had launched a massive security sweep designed to halt just this kind of apparently sectarian massacre.

A defense official said at least 79 people were killed and more than 165 wounded.

"We expect the figure to rise, as there are many seriously wounded in hospital," warned interior ministry operations director Brig. Gen. Abdel Karim Khalaf.

Traders at the Shorja market, battling intense flames to save their stock, said a car bomb had detonated in a garage beneath a multistorey wholesale menswear market packed with small stores and fabric.

Khalaf added that two more car bombs had been placed at intervals in the district, spreading devastation for 700 meters.

Firemen crowded among jostling bystanders in a tight street vainly poured streams of water into a building that was still ablaze six hours after the explosion. Nearby, a man sat alone against a red metal shutter, sobbing.

"My store was completely burned. I lost $100,000," wailed Mohammed Haider.

A mushroom of dense black smoke and a cloud of dust had poured into the sky after the massive blast rocked the city center, followed by the wail of police sirens and occasional bursts of automatic weapons fire.

As the fire spread, car petrol tanks exploded one after the other.

A second explosion ripped through Haraj market, a kilometer away in the crowded Rusafa commercial district, adding to the steady flow of bloodstained bodies arriving in four city hospitals.

According to the Islamic calendar, Monday was the first anniversary of the demolition of the golden-domed Shiite mosque in Samarra by Sunni bombers, an outrage which triggered Iraq's descent into sectarian bloodletting.

"The timing was deliberately chosen," Khalaf told AFP.

Maliki had ordered thousands of police and troops onto the street as part of a much-heralded joint Iraqi and US security plan, snarling traffic across the city as officers searched thousands of cars for weapons.

But several bombers apparently made it through the cordon.

Khalaf said that three suspects—including two whom he described as "Asians"—were being interrogated after being arrested following Monday's blitz on the capital's commercial center.

The attacks—three car bombs in a bustling wholesale trading area and an explosive device in a popular market area—struck a terrible blow to Maliki's authority as he paraded his security plan.

Television coverage of a speech he gave Monday calling on Iraqis to back the deployment of thousands of police and military reinforcements showed his team flinching as the sound of the explosion echoed round Baghdad. *AFP*

Online ads: lovers' lost and found

NEW YORK—EVER LOCKED eyes with a stranger on a train or in a store, become quickly intrigued, and later regretted not even saying "hello."

In a fast-paced world growing ever faster online, the Web is replacing the newspaper personal ad as a place where people can act belatedly on that moment of magical chemistry—with some fleeting encounters even leading to marriage.

At social networking and advertising site Craigslist.org, a subsection called Missed Connections, is rapidly becoming a destination for second chance encounters, and its ads tell tales of infatuation, hope, frustration and love.

Craigslist's chief executive Jim Buckmaster said he had heard of several marriages forged through Missed Connections which was set up in 2000. Use of the site has surged in the past three years to 75,000 new postings a month from 18,000, with San Francisco the biggest market then New York.

"It is a long shot but hope springs eternal—and people seem to have a weakness for long shots," Buckmaster told Reuters.

Ads on the site read like this: "Birmingham girl with Stella Artois at Gristedes!!!! I do not know why I did not invite you to drink beers with me...I hope is not late, I would love to."

Or this: "Confused Brunette On The A Train This Morning: You came into my A train, but quickly turned around and exited. I wish you stayed."

What are the chances?

But in New York—a city crammed with eight million people—what are the chances that the stranger from across the train will log on to the site that day, find the post and respond?

Ask Mark Svartz. While standing in line for two hours to have a book signed by American writer Jonathan Safran Foer, Svartz, 27, chatted with the girl standing in front of him. They did not exchange even their names.

"The next morning I realized that it probably would have been smart to get a number," he said.

Like the 15 million other people in the United States and Canada who use Craigslist.org each month, Svartz, an advertising executive from Manhattan, sometimes reads the Missed Connections posts for kicks. Now he had a reason to make the leap from voyeur to participant.

"I remembered she had purple slipper shoes on, so I wrote: 'Girl with purple slipper shoes. We spoke at Jonathan Safran Foer signing. Sorry I didn't get your number. Let me know if you want to talk.'"

"The next day, I got a message from her, an e-mail saying she was purple slipper girl."

But it's not just those seeking relationships who turn to Missed Connections. Some are using the site to end them. *Reuters*

VALENTINE'S DAY TREAT

Prescription drug Viagra sold over counter in UK

LONDON—MEN WILL BE able to buy impotence treatment Viagra over the counter in Britain for the first time from Valentine's Day, chemist chain Alliance Boots said on Sunday.

Three Manchester Boots pharmacies will sell the prescription-only medication made by US drugs group Pfizer in a pilot program from Feb. 14.

Men aged between 30 and 65 suffering from erectile dysfunction will be able to buy four Viagra pills for 50 pounds ($97) without having to get a prescription from a doctor first.

Instead, they will have a private consultation with a Boots pharmacist, when their medical history will be checked and measurements taken of their blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose levels.

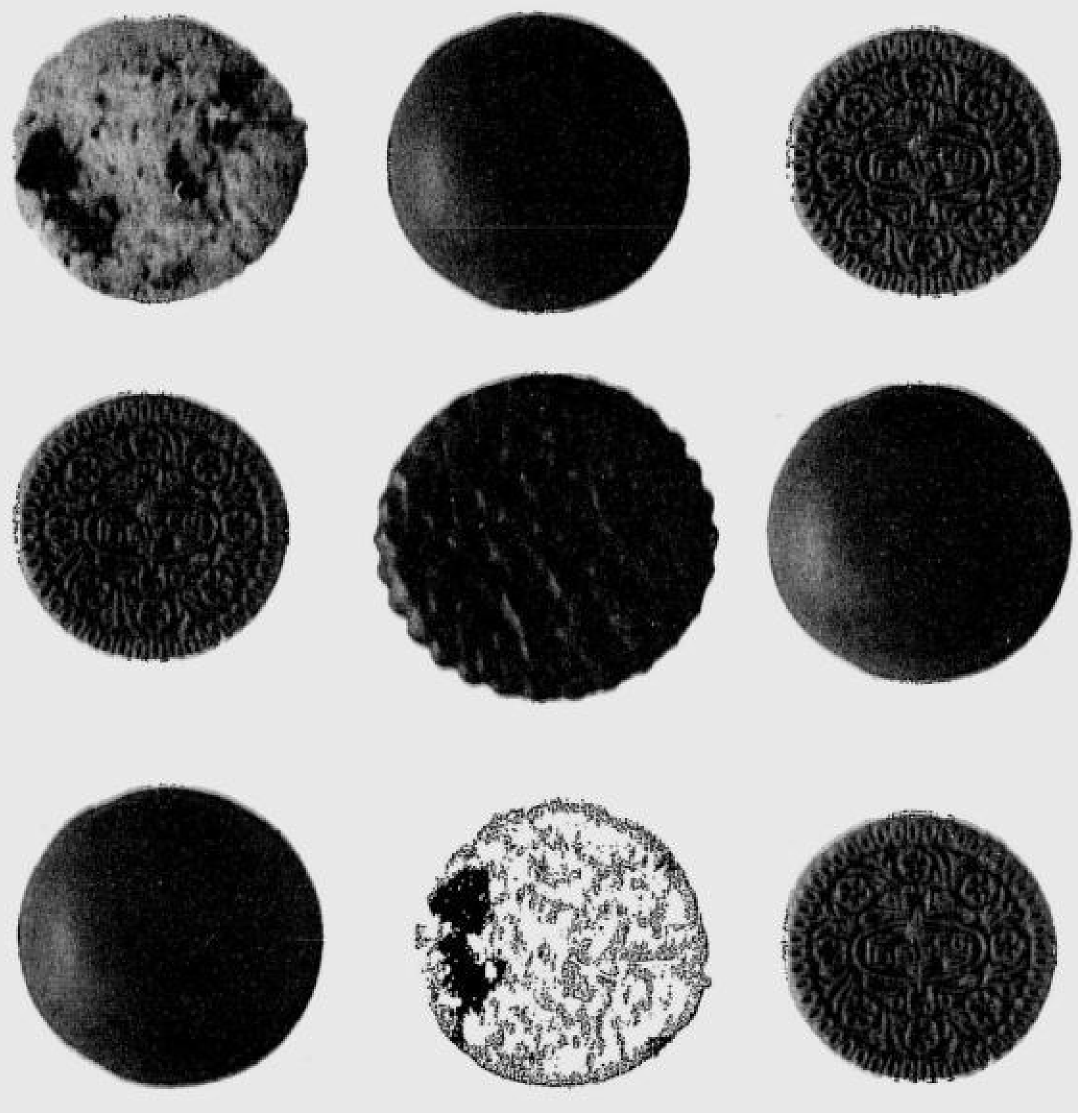
On a return visit, patients will see a private doctor to ensure they are suitable for a further supply of pills.

"By creating a service that is easily accessible on the high street we hope that we help many more men seek help for a very common condition," said Boots Director of Healthcare Alex Gourlay.

He said it was estimated that only one in 10 men suffering from erectile dysfunction were currently being treated.

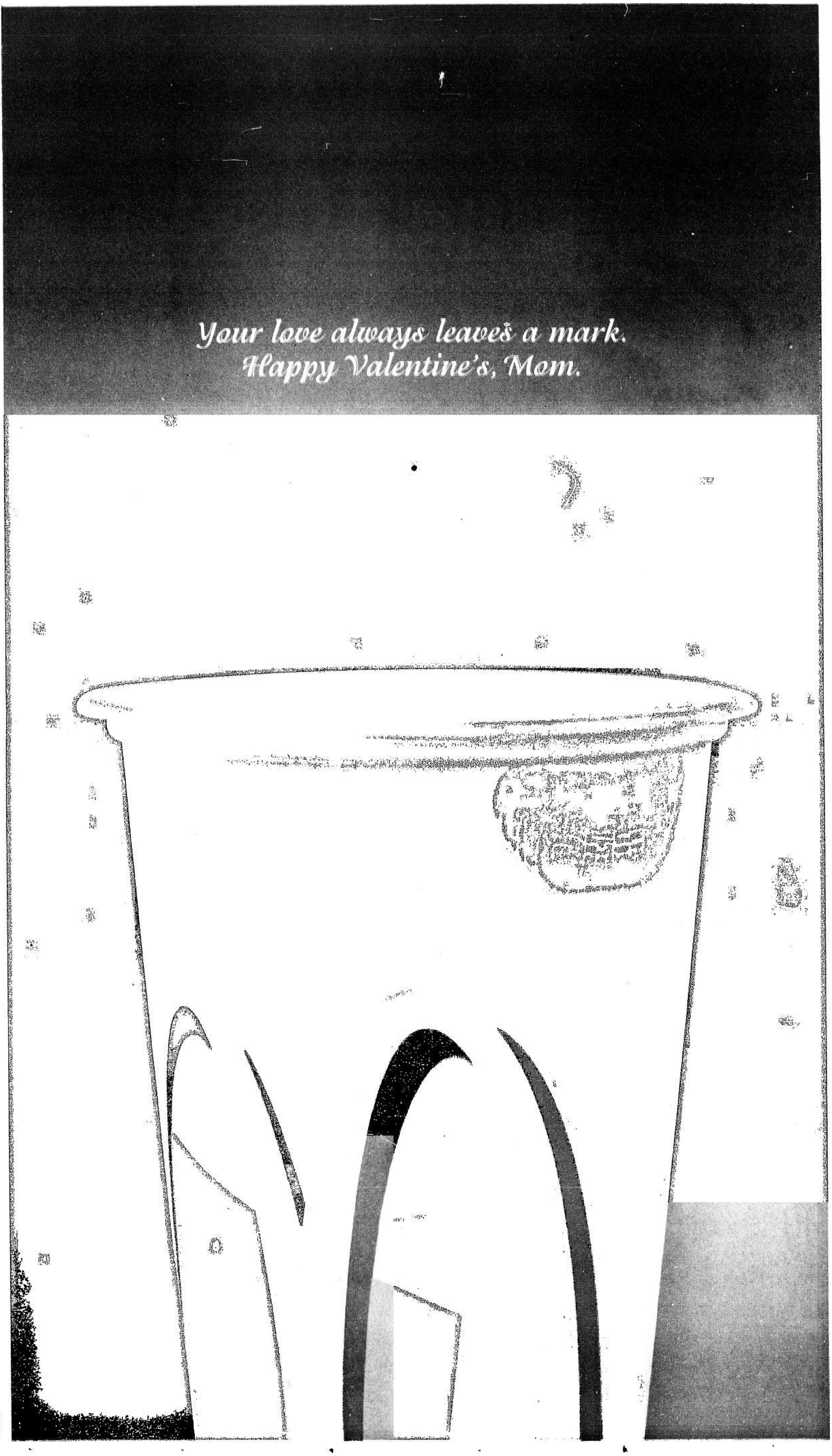
Boots already offers similar services for weight loss, hair retention and chlamydia treatment.

A national roll out of the Viagra service will be assessed later in the year. *Reuter*


Ngayong Valentine's Day, hindi mo na kailangan ng matatamis na salita

FIBISCO

Ikaw, ano'ng kwentong Fibisco mo?


Your love always leaves a mark.
Happy Valentine's, Mom.

SPORTS

Website: www.inquirer.net/sports

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Harbour nails Game 1

Story on A30

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Asoro, starters power big Harbour windup

HARBOUR Centre's Richard Alonzo gets double teamed by Hapee-PCU's Beau Belga and Mark Borboran in yesterday's Game 1. RYAN LIM

By Jasmine W. Payo

BACKUP FORWARD EDWIN ASORO set up the trap and the starters came back for the kill as Harbour Centre edged Hapee-PCU, 84-80, last night and claimed a 1-0 lead in the PBL Silver Cup Finals last night at the Olivarez College Sports Center.

Chico Lanete and Ron Capati knocked in key baskets in the final two minutes as the Port Masters made a rousing start in the best-of-five championship series.

"We started bad, but at least we picked up in the fourth quarter, which is the most important," said Harbour Centre coach Jorge Gallent. "Asoro has been playing well, he's providing quality minutes."

Coming off a sensational semifinal stint, Lanete buried a crucial jumper that swung the lead back to Harbour Centre, 72-71, time down to 2:33.

Capati, Harbour's veteran starting center, also converted two crucial baskets in the shaded lane as the Port Masters built a 78-73 buffer heading into the final minute.

Asoro overshadowed an off-form JC Intal for a team-high 17 points.

Earlier, Mail and More capped its impressive maiden campaign with a third-place finish after disposing Toyota Otis, 77-72, in their one-game duel.

JR Quiñahan delivered 22 points, eight rebounds and five assists for the Comets, who bowed to Hapee-PCU in the semifinals.

Harbour Centre also drew strong performances from its bench with Jerwin Gaco providing the hustle underneath and Ryan Araña effectively shackling Hapee-PCU main man Jason Castro.

Although Larry Rodriguez sizzled with 20 points for the Teeth Masters, Castro was held to only eight points.

The Teeth Masters struggled from the line, connecting in only 12 of 21 attempts in the final period.

Philip Butel provided the Port Masters some last-minute scare when he shot four straight points that trimmed the margin to a bucket, 79-77, with 15.5 seconds left.

But the Port Masters stayed afloat with steady shooting at the foul line, nailing five of their last six in the dying seconds.

The scores:

First Game

MAIL AND MORE 77—Quinahan 22, Buenafe 13, Bravo 13, David 11, Te 7, Espiritu 7, Canizares 2, Ballesteros 2, Aquino 0, Del Rosario 0, Viray 0.

TOYOTA OTIS 72—Cruz 12, Santos 11, Cabahug 10, Coronel 10, Fajardo 8, Jazul 8, Daa 4, Aldave 3, Dedicatoria 2, Alcaraz 2, Jaime 2, Rodriguez 0, Quinday 0, Guevarra 0, Yabut 0.

Quarters: 16-17, 41-39, 55-51, 77-72

Second Game

HARBOUR CENTRE 84—Asoro 17, Lanete 14, Gaco 12, Arana 11, Intal 8, Capati 7, Fernandez 6, Alonzo 5, Gamboa 4, Williams 0, Raymundo 0, Vergara 0, Coching 0, Ortiguerra 0.

HAPEE-PCU 80—L. Rodriguez 20, Butel 12, Borboran 10, Castro 8, J. Rodriguez 6, Bucao 6, Moreno 6, Hugnatan 4, Larong 0, Sanz 0.

Quarters: 18-21, 41-39, 59-52, 84-80

Toyota-Iloilo returns to NBC

THE TOYOTA-ILOILO WARRIORS OF THE Iloilo Basketball League will be back to strut their stuff in the National Basketball Conference.

NBC secretary general Tito Palma and the Warriors' team owner Robert Uy and strong supporter Mayor Jerry Trenas finalized Toyota-Iloilo's entry into the fourth season of the country's premier regional cagefest recently.

Last year, the Warriors made it to the semifinals of the first conference but skipped the last conference. With the Warriors enjoying a bigger fan base and strong support from the local government, Uy and Trenas are confident that they would be able to improve their showing.

The fourth season is set to start on March 10 at the Quezon Convention Center in Lucena City. Villa Anita-Quezon and MP Pacman-Gensan are two of the expansion teams seeing action.

"It will be an exciting conference as the Warriors are out to make a big bang this time," said NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla.

It's not just height the Mamiits share

PROUD DAD: Cesar Mamiit (left) can't help watch his son Cecil fight the brave fight.
INQUIRER PHOTO/EDWIN BACASMAS

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TALK TO CESAR MAMIIT ABOUT IT and he'll tell you that height—or the lack of it—isn't the only thing his now-famous son inherited from him.

Courage, for one. Superstition, too.

"*Siguro nga sa akin niya nakuha yung tapang* (Maybe he got his courage from me)," said the 60-year-old Cesar of current tennis sensation Cecil Mamiit. "*Matapang din siya, lalo na sa* court (He is very brave, especially on the court)."

Cesar found himself in the spotlight after Cecil clinched for the Philippines its Davis Cup tie against Pakistan.

The 5-foot-7 standout of the RP squad hauled his dad to his side during an interview and jokingly told the crowd that he got his height from him.

Parallel course

But Cecil's path to becoming the "wonder drug" for the ills of Philippine tennis—he became the youngest US NCAA champion after the great John McEnroe and piled up ATP winnings before flying home to represent the country—runs a parallel course to the path his dad took en route to becoming a successful family man in the United States.

Talking to the INQUIRER hours before flying back to the US, the elder Mamiit recalled that fateful day in 1972 when he arrived in the States without any known relatives or friends, and with just $300 in his pocket.

Tired of working as a casual employee, Cesar left his hometown in Alaminos, Laguna, to take his chances abroad. An accountant by profession, he ended up working as a computer technician.

"They asked me about my work experience, but I told them I just got here three days ago," the elder Mamiit said. "But that didn't deter me from my ambitions. Maybe, in that sense, Cecil is like me."

Cecil is the only child of Cesar and Lisa Valdeavilla, a nurse who traces her roots to Sariaya, Quezon.

Cesar has watched all of Cecil's matches in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, 2006 Asian Games and the Davis Cup ties, including the just-concluded conquest of Pakistan over the weekend.

"I kept fidgeting, I couldn't stay in one seat, especially when Pakistan forced a tiebreak [during the doubles match with Eric Taino]," said Cesar.

Superstition, too, is something the two share.

There is a silent agreement between them that if Cesar isn't able to watch the start of a tournament where Cecil is playing well, then he won't watch it entirely to prevent breaking the lucky spell.

Sometimes the pull of being a dad is just too strong. He recalled the 1999 ATP tourney semifinals in San Jose where Cecil was playing Michael Chang in the semifinals.

"He (Cecil) didn't know that I was there," he said. "But I couldn't help it, I wanted to watch him play, so I tried to hide in the stands because I didn't want to be blamed if he lost the match."

Mamiit defeated Chang, and his name made headlines in the Philippines.

That leaves little doubt that the pocket-sized Cecil considers dad Cesar as his lucky charm.

Net heroes to carry RP colors versus New Zealand

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LOCAL TENNIS HEROES CECIL MAMIIT AND Eric Taino will suit up for the country in the Davis Cup "for as long as they are playing tennis."

Credited for pumping adrenaline into Philippine tennis, Mamiit and Taino helped the country win its Asia Oceania Group II tie against Pakistan, 4-1, over the weekend.

The world No. 180-ranked Mamiit told yesterday's PSA Forum at the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila that they are certain of playing in the April 6-8 semifinals against New Zealand in Auckland.

Mamiit also plans to join four tournaments, including a $1-million event in Las Vegas, between now and the Cup tie to equip himself in the RP drive to barge into Group I next year.

The 30-year-old Mamiit, who won the opening singles and the doubles with Taino before securing the tie with a third victory in the reverse singles, said he prefers to bring along fellow Cuppers PJ Tierro and Johnny Arcilla to the United States so they can play in tougher tournaments.

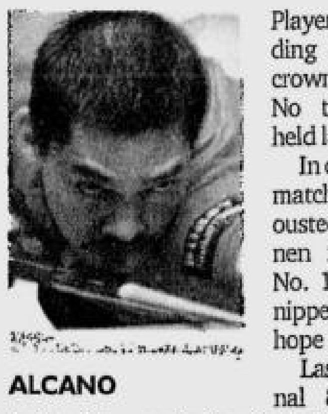
"I see a lot of kids out here today, I hope that one day you would join us and be part of the team," said Mamiit.

"I had more opportunities having been born in the States, and for all the success that I had, I don't want to be selfish," he added.

Ajay Pathak, the vice president for external affairs of the Philippine Lawn Tennis Association, said Mamiit and Taino have given their word that they would play for the country in Davis Cup ties "for as long as they are playing tennis."

To make Group I, the Philippines has to hurdle New Zealand and then score another victory against the winner of the other semifinals pitting Kuwait and Indonesia.

Alcano forges finals clash with Immonen



ALCANO

REIGNING WORLD Pool champion Ronnie Alcano hurdled two Japanese opponents in succession to forge a title showdown with Finland's Mika Immonen in the 2nd Annual Brunswick KPT Pro Championships yesterday at the Lotte Department Store in Incheon, South Korea.

Alcano avenged the loss of countryman Dennis Orcollo to Japan's Kawachi in the round of 8 and then disposed of Mizushita, 7-3, in the semifinals to barge into last night's finals against Immonen, the 2001 World Pool champion.

Immonen hurdled Japan's Tomoo Takano, winner of the 17th Annual All Kansai 9-Ball Open in Osaka, Japan, last month.

The 34-year-old Alcano, acknowledged by the Billiards Digest magazine as the "Most Improved Player" in 2006, is bidding to regain the crown he won in 2005. No tournament was held last year.

In other quarterfinal matches, Mizushita ousted Sugaya, Immonen routed Japanese No. 1 Oi and Takano nipped last Korean hope Kim Hee-chul.

Last Monday, the Final 8 players drew cards for final placements against their counterparts in the Winner Side 8. Korea's Choi Wan-young was the first victim, yielding to Immonen, 10-2, and Kim stunned American Charlie Williams, 10-5, to barge into the quarterfinals.

Orcollo rallied from 5-8 to tie at 9-9 but lost the 19th rack to Kawachi.

Alcano's earlier victims were Korean Pil Hyun-cho, Japan's Takemoto, 9-6, and Korean No. 1 Hahm.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Libel with a heart, gift from the BAP

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

HOW'S THIS FOR A VALENTINE TREAT?

Your reporter here has just been sued for libel by Graham Lim, secretary general of the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

There was no way to immediately confirm the report, but my informant says I had been summoned to the Manila City Fiscal's Office today.

That, to say the least, was very sharp and sensitive of secretary Lim.

At least, he made sure that I will be extra busy and uncomfortable on this Day of Hearts.

* * *

Thank you very much.

The court summons and other hassles considered, I can still find time and space to pick up a red rose for my dear Muse today.

You don't know who this guy who wanted me jailed?

Lim, repeat, was mainly responsible for the most ignominious performance of the Philippine national basketball team in the international competitions.

Last week, the Court of Appeals upheld his deportation.

Lim had previously been condemned as a fake Filipino and ordered banished from the Philippines by the Bureau of Immigration.

* * *

Lim had no business being here, much less dictating amateur basketball affairs.

How he was able to skip the law, in the process authoring some of most atrocious acts in Philippine basketball, spoke of our limp, cockeyed judicial system here.

Of course, Lim had the right to feel maligned after we pointed out his misdeeds.

The libel charge showed that, after all, he was not numb and insensitive as a bedbug, the dreaded, pesky mite to which he had been compared by critics and enemies.

For the record, Lim's mismanagement and mishandling of national basketball affairs was the main cause for the suspension of the BAP by the Philippine Olympic Committee.

* * *

Now, hold back that swatter, please.

Lim, whom his eager foes had wanted smashed, also deserves a pat on the back.

Why? Well, honestly speaking, reforms in RP basketball would have not been forthcoming if not for Lim.

The decay he had ushered into the national sporting landscape definitely left the POC with no choice but to ban the BAP.

This penalty ultimately led to the international basketball federation, Fiba, slapping an indefinite suspension on the Philippines.

As the saying goes, the rest is history.

* * *

After the Fiba had made sure Lim would not snap up his dreamed executive directorship of the newly formed national cage body, there should be no stopping RP basketball on its way to sensible recovery.

Repeat: Lim's misdeeds definitely helped usher in reforms and the current revolution in RP basketball.

No other alien could have done it.

So, put it on, sir. Let the hearings begin.

Who knows? Graham Lim—may he find his true citizenship—could yet make a martyr out of your hypertensive reporter here.

If he succeeds in sending me to jail—I love bedbugs, too—that libel suit should go down as one great gift.

A warm, memorable Valentine's to you all!

Kings fight for dear life today

Realtors replace Chua

JONG UICHICO NEEDS TO PRESS THE PANIC BUTTON JUST ABOUT now, as he tries to avoid being put in a hole no team in the Philippine Basketball Association has ever come out of.

Uichico's Barangay Ginebra Kings clash with the San Miguel Beermen in Game 3 tonight of their Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup Finals, looking to avoid falling behind, 0-3, and challenging the most enduring piece of record in the league.

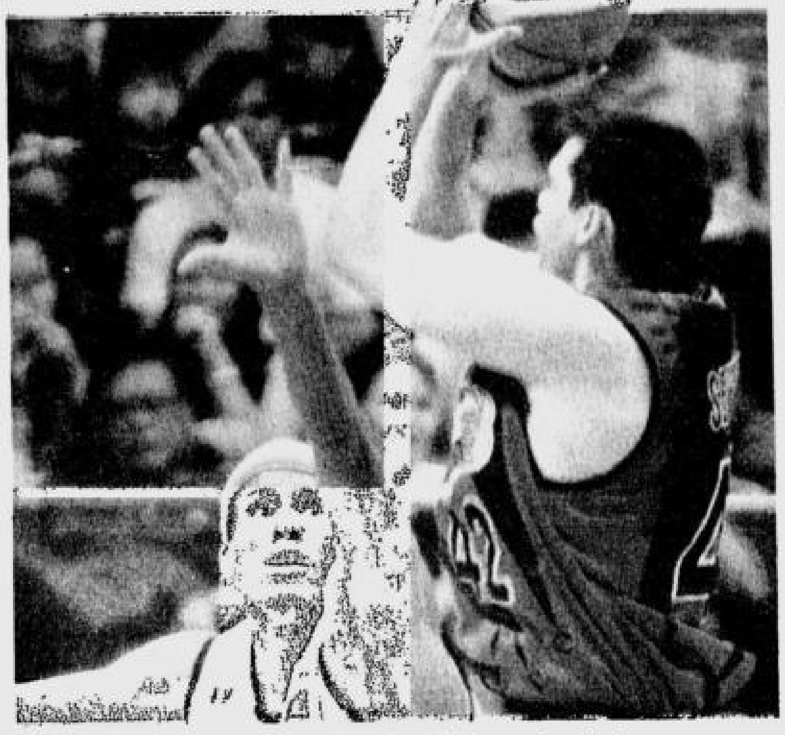
"Yes, if we win Game 3, then I think we have a great chance at winning the series," San Miguel coach Chot Reyes said, still playing it safe despite coming off a win that could have very well taken the fight out of the Kings last Sunday.

"This is not over, not by a long shot," Reyes had said after going two games up with a high-wire 104-101 decision made possible by a brilliant yet unconventional defensive play he ordered with 24 ticks left.

GAME TODAY
(*Cuneta Astrodome*)
7 p.m.—San Miguel
vs. Barangay Ginebra

"Ginebra is such a stout-hearted team. They will come back harder and we must be prepared for that," he added.

If a comeback for the Kings is to happen, it must start in the 7 p.m. game at the Cuneta Astrodome.


DANNY Seigle (right) will be Ginebra's biggest headache anew.

"We need to take this one game at a time," Uichico said.

Meanwhile, Sta. Lucia yesterday announced the elevation of Boyet Fernandez to the head coach's position in place of Al Chua, the Realtors' coach for the last four seasons.

A brief statement e-mailed to media offices said that the team, "upon consultation with top company and club officials, has decided to pursue a different direction" and has given Chua a consultant's capacity.

Adonis Tierra ad Cholo Martin will remain as deputies.

The Kings improved by leaps and bounds compared to their Game 1 effort, a 94-118 loss after they were blown off the court in the first half as San Miguel's gunners hit their strides. But it wasn't enough to derail the Beermen.

Eric Menk, out during the Talk 'N Text series and the first game of the Finals, finally saw some minutes in Game 2 and helped with the intangibles needed to turn back a team like the Beermen.

Menk helped Ginebra hold its own inside the paint against Dorian Peña and Rommel Adducul. *Musong R. Castillo*

Air21 confirms interest in Jawo

By Musong R. Castillo

AIR21 WANTS ROBERT JAWORSKI to handle the Express in the Philippine Basketball Association.

A statement issued yesterday by the Air21 franchise said that Jaworski will meet with team manager Lito Alvarez tomorrow to discuss the possibility of the "Big J" holding a front-office position or, better yet, calling the shots for the Express.

"We're very excited at the possibility of hiring him to coach the Express for the coming conference," Alvarez said in the statement. "But of course, we would like to hear his thoughts first on whether he would like to be head of our basketball operations, or assume a full-time coaching job."

Jaworski, arguably the most charismatic figure ever to play and coach in the league, is being wooed to take over the job currently held by Bo Perasol.

"He (Perasol) will slide down to assistant coach once the former senator agrees," Alvarez said. "There won't be a problem with coach Bo. As a matter of fact, he's excited at the prospect of with him."

JAWORSKI: PBA giant

Jaworski won practically every award there is as a player in the PBA, including the Most Valuable Player trophy in 1978, before becoming the first playing coach to win a championship with Anejo Rum in the late 1980s.

The 60-year-old, who won a seat in the Senate after a glorious 24-year professional career, won four titles with the Ginebra franchise. He was the man responsible for instilling Ginebra's never-say-die attitude.

Alvarez said he isn't putting undue pressure on Jaworski to transform the Express team overnight.

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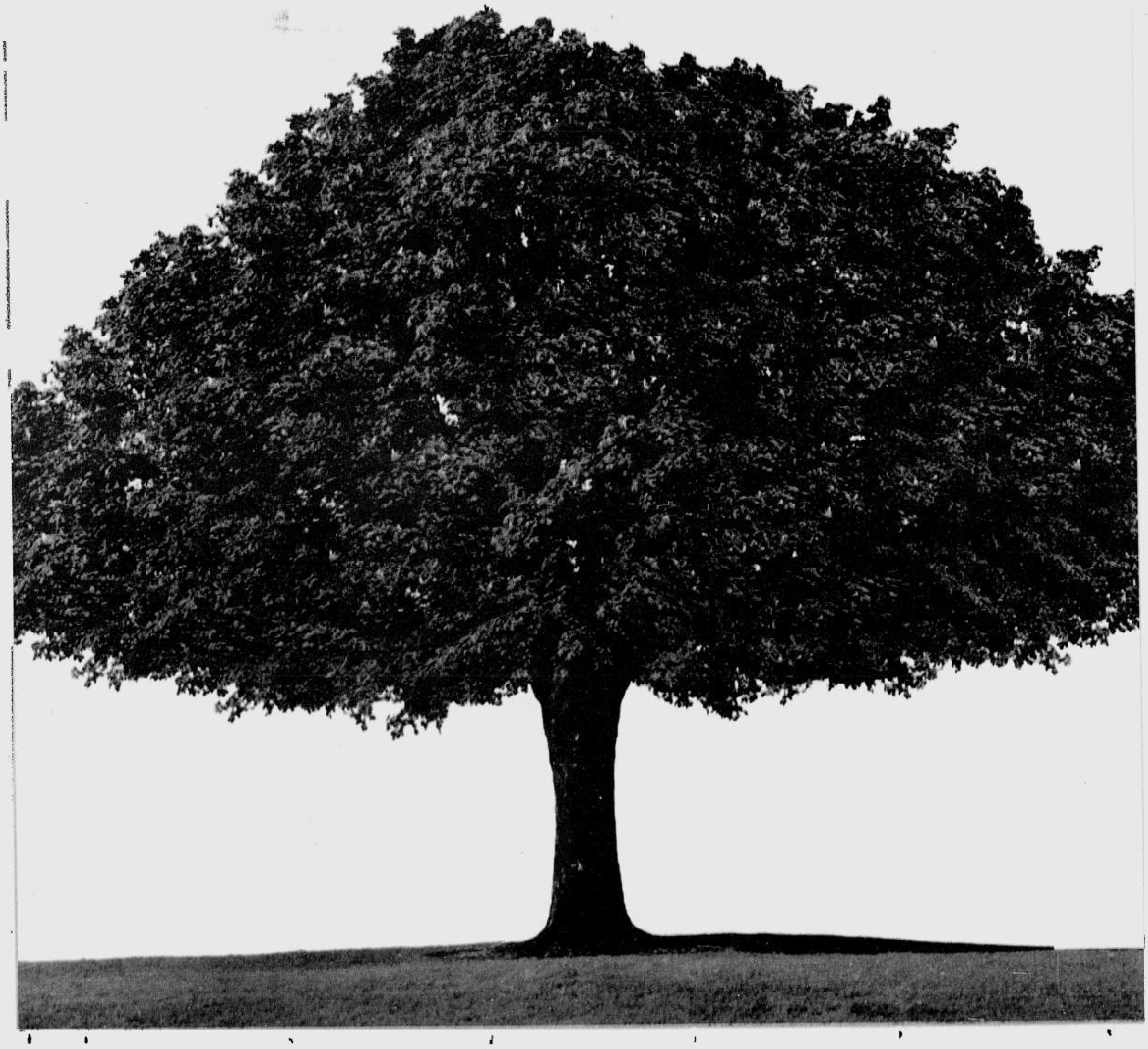
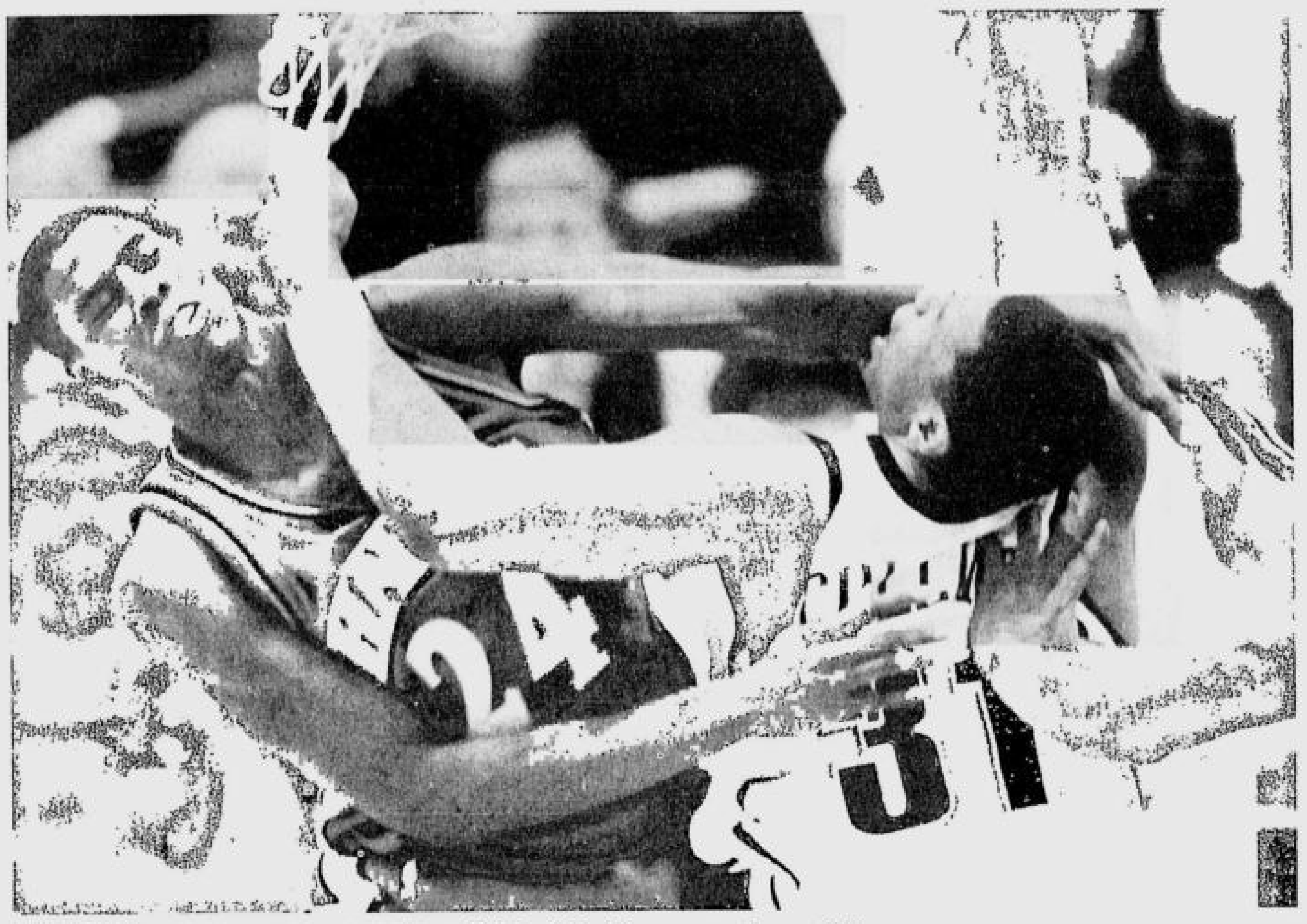
NEW SPAPER DRIVE
INQUIRER



Webber fuels hot Pistons



ATLANTA Hawks forward Marvin Williams (24) fouls Utah Jazz center Jarron Collins. AP

DETROIT, MICHIGAN—CHRIS WEBBER had 19 points and nine rebounds and Richard Hamilton scored 15 points as Detroit extended their win streak to seven games with a 92-74 win over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Tayshaun Prince netted 14 points and Rasheed Wallace chipped in 10 and two blocks for the Pistons on Monday, who have won six in a row at the Palace and against the Clippers.

With the win, Detroit (32-18) pulled within one game of tying its season-high eight-game winning streak set from December 17 to January 1.

"It feels good (winning), and if you look at our losses you'll see how close they were," Webber said. "I'm excited, but we can do better. I'm excited about our potential, but potential means nothing."

WEBBER REUTERS

The Pistons improved to 11-3 since signing Webber for the remainder of the National Basketball Association season on January 16.

"He (Webber) is aggressive," Prince said. "There was a period there where he was just attacking the basket, making plays, going to the offensive glass. There was a point in the game where he took over and made great decisions."

Detroit took control in the third quarter, using an impressive 15-3 surge through the opening 4½ minutes for a 58-41 bulge behind Webber, who poured in eight points during the run.

The Pistons outscored the Clippers, 26-18, in the period and shot 47 percent (8-of-17) from the floor, coasting from there.

Cuttino Mobley scored 17 points and Chris Kaman added 13 and nine rebounds for Los Angeles, which finished just 2-5 on its seven-game East Coast road trip.

"This is the longest trip of the year, and we wanted it to turn out better than it did," Clippers coach Mike Dunleavy told reporters.

"There were a couple games on the trip that we played against teams that we felt we could beat, but we didn't get the job done."

In other games, it was Utah 102, Atlanta 76; Denver 123, Golden State 111.

In Denver, Carmelo Anthony and JR Smith scored 28 points apiece to help Denver get the win.

Anthony sat out much of the fourth quarter after his bruised right thigh, which he hurt in the first half, tightened up on him.

Golden State guard Stephen Jackson was late for the game after testifying in the trial in Indianapolis of a man who hit him with a car during a fight outside a strip club last October. The man was convicted on Monday in a ruling by a judge.

Jackson started the second half and quickly picked up a technical for arguing a call with official Jess Kersey. He finished with nine points.

Denver's Marcus Camby had eight points and seven rebounds in his return from a four-game absence with a pulled groin and the flu.

Al Harrington led the Warriors with 24 points.

In Salt Lake City, Mehmet Okur had 19 points and six rebounds before sitting out the fourth quarter and Utah won its fifth in a row.

Andrei Kirilenko had 11 points and four blocks for the Jazz, who are on their longest winning streak since they won eight in a row in November while opening the season 12-1.

Marvin Williams led Atlanta with 15 points. Williams also got a bloody nose when he took a forearm by Utah's Rafael Araujo early in the fourth quarter, which resulted in Araujo getting ejected and Atlanta's Josh Smith getting a technical as Williams remained down in the lane.

After Araujo left to a standing ovation from the Jazz fans, both coaches pulled their starters before anybody else could get hurt or in trouble before the All-Star break.

The Hawks had won five straight on the road. *Reuters, AFP, AP*

Coming out not easy for Amaechi

NEW YORK—FIVE DAYS AFTER BECOMING the first NBA player to acknowledge his homosexuality, former center John Amaechi said the spotlight has been chaotic.

Amaechi, whose "Man in the Middle" memoir will be released on Wednesday, said he has been deluged with phone calls and e-mails from friends and supporters. But Boston Celtics coach Doc Rivers, who coached the English player in Orlando, has been the only one from the league to reach out to him.

"I've just been caught up in the whirlwind at the moment," Amaechi said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He said he hoped his coming out would be a catalyst for intelligent discourse and took a measured approach to NBA players' reactions.

"I think they illustrate the diversity of opinion," Amaechi said. "Some of them illustrate a great deal of naivete, and an oversimplification of the issue. And some of them don't speak with much thought at all."

Amaechi's also listened to some who criticize him for coming out now, rather than when he was a player.

AMAECHI AP

"I know that perhaps that would have been more impactful," he said, but added he was afraid to have his dream of playing in the NBA taken away.

"I worked really hard to get where I was. I started playing basketball when I was 17 in a country that doesn't play basketball. I was a fat kid that sat in the corner of the library, and six years later I was starting for the Cleveland Cavaliers. I left my family, my mother, when she was very sick with cancer, to do this thing.

"I thought I deserved to have my full shot at being a part of the NBA."

Now, Amaechi said he hoped to inspire high-level personalities to come out as straight allies.

"I don't think it's realistic to expect that," he said. "But I think if we work with them they will."

He's been so busy he didn't realize at least one already had.

"When you do something that the whole world thinks is difficult and you stand up and just be who you are and take on that difficulty factor, you're an American hero no matter what," Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

Amaechi allowed a smile to wash over his face: "He just became my friend." *AP*

Injured Nash withdraws from All-Stars

PHOENIX—TWO-TIME LEAGUE MVP Steve Nash withdrew from Sunday's NBA All-Star game because of lingering inflammation in his right shoulder.

Nash missed the last 3½ games because of the injury. The Phoenix Suns said on Monday the Canadian won't play against Seattle on Wednesday, the club's last game before the All-Star break.

The decision means Nash will have had two weeks to rest and treat the shoulder before the Suns play their first post-All-Star contest Feb. 20 against the Los Angeles Clippers.

"Steve's just not ready to play right now. He needs the recovery and rehab time," coach Mike D'Antoni said in a statement released by the team. "He hasn't recovered as quickly as we anticipated. Hopefully, he'll be able to resume play after the All-Star break."

Nash will attend the All-Star festivities in Las Vegas, the team said.

NBA commissioner David Stern will announce Nash's replacement. There must also be a substitute for Nash in the NBA Skills Challenge on Saturday. He was to have faced LeBron James, Kobe Bryant and Dwyane Wade in that competition.

Nash, who turned 33 last Wednesday, was scheduled to play in his fifth All-Star game in the last six years. Although he is averaging career highs in points (19.3) and assists (an NBA-leading 11.8), he was not voted a starter by fans. Instead, he was one of three Phoenix players added as reserves.

Nash is on track to become the first NBA player to average at least 19 points and 11 assists since Magic Johnson and Kevin Johnson did it in 1989-90.

D'Antoni will coach the Western Conference team and will decide who will replace injured Yao Ming as a starter. Utah's Carlos Boozer also was named to the team but will miss the game because of injury.

Carmelo Anthony of Denver was selected to replace Yao on the roster and Josh Howard of Dallas will take the place of Boozer. Amare Stoudemire and Shawn Marion are Phoenix's other representatives on the West squad. *AP*

Karters test-drive bids in Cavite race

TOP KARTERS TRY TO FIND OUT where they stand in their preparations for the coming 2007 Shell Superkarting Series season when they compete in the first Sorteo Grand Prix set February 17 at the Carmona Circuit Philippines in Cavite.

Participating karters will be competing for titles in the following divisions: The Cadet 60, Mini-ROK; Junior ROK Cup, Senior ROK Cup, Formula SL, Rotax Max Seniors, Rotax Max Novice, Rotax Max Veterans and the premiere Formula 125 Open.

No less than the municipality's chief executive Carmona Mayor Dahlia A. Loyola will grace the event as Guest-of-Honor in the opening ceremony at 11 a.m.

The whole-day event is a joint collaboration between Mayor Loyola herself and Carmona Circuit Philippines managing director Johnny Tan as part of the week-long Sorteo Festival to commemorate the 150th Founding Anniversary of Carmona.

Expected to lead the cast are 2006 Karter of the Year Matteo Guidicelli and Marlon Stockinger, the protagonists in last year's Formula 125 Open; and Javi Benitez and John Alvarez in the Rotax Max Juniors.

Interested karters may call up Rose Feria at the Carmona Circuit Philippines office at 817-2241 or 844-7766 for details.

PAL Interclub draws 78 senior teams

CAGAYAN DE ORO—SEVENTY-EIGHT teams, including 31 from other countries, have confirmed their participation in the Seniors division of the 60th Philippine Airlines Interclub, generally acknowledged as the national golf team championship of the Philippines, which tees off Friday.

Twenty teams hail from Luzon, 14 from the Visayas and 13 from Mindanao. Providing international flavor are clubs from the United States, Australia, Saudi Arabia, China and Canada.

The Seniors competition, confined to players who are 55 or older, takes place from February 16 to 18, after which the centerpiece 60th Men's Regular tournament takes over from February 21 to 24.

Hosting the tournament PAL executives conceptualized in 1947 and launched the following year are Pueblo de Oro Golf & Country Club, situated on a 350-meter plateau above this city, and Del Monte Golf and Country Club in nearby Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

"Once again, we have the big numbers and we are not surprised," said PAL senior assistant vice president for Mindanao Domingo T. Duerme, the Interclub chair. "After all, we are marking our 60th year, which makes the PAL Interclub the country's longest-running amateur golf tournament."

ZUBIRI

Leading the teams competing for bragging rights within the country's golfing fraternity is defending champion Canlubang, which swept both division titles last year in Davao City.

Expected to challenge the Laguna par busters in their bids for their 14th regular crown and second Seniors title are Manila Southwoods, local favorite Del Monte and perennial contender Luisita.

Action Asia, Airbus, Boeing, Bombardier, Callaway Golf, 105.1 Crossover, GE Aviation, GECAS, Mizuno, People Asia and Royal Caribbean are the major sponsors while the corporate supporters are Business Mirror, Fortune Tobacco, GMA 7, Premier Wine & Spirits, www.inquirer.net, and Radio Mindanao Network, whose local station in Cagayan de Oro, DXGC, is currently celebrating its 55th anniversary.

Other backers are Century Park Hotel, C-Lium Fibre, Foreign Post, Lufthansa Technik Philippines and What's On & Expat Communications.

The traditional hitting of the ceremonial drives will kick off the Seniors championship at 8 a.m. to be capped with the team captains' meeting an hour later at the Del Monte clubhouse.

Special guests are Bukidnon governor Jose Ma. R. Zubiri, Manolo Fortich mayor Socorro O. Acosta, Del Monte Philippines general manager Luis F. Alejandro and Pueblo de Oro Development Corp. vice president-general manager Rodolfo Menes.

They will join PAL president Jaime Bautista and Duerme in hitting the ceremonial drives for the Seniors event.

Doing the honors for the Men's Regular tournament are Cagayan de Oro Rep. Constantino Jaraula, Court of Appeals justice Rodolfo L. Lim Jr., Del Monte Philippines assistant general manager Henry T. Lao and Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce and Industry top official Ruben V. Vegafrancia, along with Bautista and Duerme.

SHUTTLE CHAMPS

The INQUIRER badminton team, composed of (from left) men's duo Jay Arzobal and Edwin Bacasmas, women's tandem Gigi Libby and Vangie Baga-Reyes, and mixed pair Doris Dumlao and Genie Lagman are all smiles after bagging the championship trophy in the Yonex-Sunrise-National Press Club (NPC) Tri-Media Badminton Championship at the Rizal Badminton Hall in Manila.

Nestea serves beach volley this March

By Jasmine W. Payo

SPIKING SUMMER ACTION BLASTS off this March as 48 teams from 33 universities and colleges compete for the Nestea Beach Volley 11 championship, which features fewer participants but promises heightened competition.

Aiming for another shot at the title are 2006 men's champion Adamson University and women's titlist College of St. Benilde.

"There are less [contenders, but] we have very competitive teams raring to prove themselves worthy of the title," said Tina Samaco, Nestle AVP and Nestea consumer marketing manager, during a press conference yesterday at the National Sports Grill in Greenbelt, Makati.

Top qualifiers in each leg will fly to Boracay for the semifinal and championship rounds from April 19 to 21.

Powerhouse pairs from Luzon will see action in the elimination phase on March 21 and 22 at the sand court of La Salle Greenhills.

Aside from the defending champions, also in the mix in the first qualifying leg are inaugural winners University of Santo Tomas and University of the Philippines, and former titlists Far Eastern University, San Sebastian College and Letran.

Participants from up north include the University of Baguio, University of the Cordilleras and University of Luzon. Representing Cavite is De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, while Philippine Christian University, Lyceum University and St. Francis of Assisi College complete the Metro Manila cast.

Southwestern University, women's champion from 2003 to 2005, will lead the Visayan teams fighting for slots from March 27 to 28.

Previous men's titlists University of San Jose-Recoletos and Foundation University will also see action along with University of the Visayas, Iloilo Doctors College, University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos, University of St. La Salle-Bacolod, University of San Agustin and University of Southern Philippines Foundation.

Mindanao, hoping to produce its first winner in the 11th edition of the tournament, will wrap up the elimination leg on March 29 and 30.

Among the contenders are Holy Cross of Davao College, Mindanao State University, Capitol University, Tawi-Tawi Regional Agricultural College, Mahardika Institute of Technology, Mindanao State University-Marawi, Western Mindanao Sate University and University of Mindanao in Davao and Tagum.

Each champion pair in the men and women's divisions will bag P150,000. The runner-up in the games, sanctioned by the Federation Internationale de Volleyball, will take home P75,000, while the third placer will receive P40,000.

Juvic seeks repeat win in TCC Invt'l; P3M at stake

ASIAN TOUR ROOKIE OF THE YEAR JUVIC Pagunsan tries to become the first back-to-back winner of the Don Pocholo Razon Invitational golf tournament as he heads an elite roster of players chasing the P1.32 million top purse in the annual event firing off Feb. 22 at The Country Club in Laguna.

Despite missing the cut consecutively at the Philippine Open and Malaysian Open, the smooth-swinging shotmaker remains the favorite in the P3 million championship.

The lucrative event was put up by port services magnate Ricky Razon in 2002 to honor the memory of his late father, Don Pocholo, an avid golfer.

Out to foil the 28-year-old Pagunsan's bid are RP Open champion Frankie Miñoza and runner-up Gerald Rosales, as well as former winners Cassius Casas, Jerome Delariarte and Tony Lascuña.

Pagunsan nipped Miñoza in a playoff to capture last year's crown. He successfully earned an Asian Tour card by placing 14th in the Qualifying School, then went on to post top 10 finishes in the RP Open, Brunei Open and Volkswagen Masters in China before producing a stirring runner-up finish in the Hong Kong Open.

But no one holds a distinct advantage at The Country Club, where strong winds at this time of the year are expected to test the players' mental toughness and skills.

Five female amateurs, training under the ICTSI golf program headed by national coach Bong Lopez, are also competing. They are Junior World champions Dottie Ardina and Cyna Rodriguez, Mia Piccio, Crystal Superal and Anya Tanpinco.

Meanwhile, Francis Andrews of ICTSI, Oscar Sevilla of PPA, Jose Ibazeta of Anscor and Ernest Villareal of WG&A head the roster of guests competing in the pro-am event set Feb. 21.

10 chess players given 5 days to prove innocence

THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) yesterday gave 10 players suspected of fixing games and of networking five days to refute in writing all the allegations against them.

At the same time, the committee also offered the suspected players—seven of whom attended the fact-finding meeting—lesser punishment if they will accept their guilt in the scheme designed to rig tournament results.

Many of the players, however, insisted they were innocent of the allegations.

International arbiter and NCFP tournament chair Willie Abalos and International Master Jayson Gonzales, members of the six-man fact-finding committee, said their report determined possible irregularities in last year's NCFP-sanctioned tournaments like the 1st GMA Cup, 2nd Pichay Cup (National Open), Tanauan Open and Malaysian Open. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

SPORTSWATCH

SJC Cockers Club derby on

THE NEWLY FORMED SJC COCKERS CLUB presents another special 4-cock derby today at its home, the San Juan Coliseum, with 68 fights sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Among those who are ready to unleash their prized fighters are Vince Cuyugan, Dennis Morales, Col del Mundo, Mario Garcia, Tony Manalansan, Osang dela Cruz, Sam Mendoza, Butchoy Olano, Lito Roque, Enjie Nas, Bobby Nicolas, Honey Yu, Anthony Lim, 2006 Bakbakan champion Bobby Doromal, Raymond Velayo, Rep. Danny Lagbas and Mayor Salvador Perez. Meanwhile, the SJC Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan comes next on Saturday with Ed Guevarra, Renato Shio and Minda Amoyo as hosts.

200 entries in 'Largahan'

SOME 200 COCKERS HAVE ALREADY SIGNED up for the upcoming P2-million Largahan 5-Cock Derby at Roligon Mega Cockpit on Feb. 22, 24, 26 and 28. Backed by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone, the four-day super cockfest requires an entry fee of P4,400 and a minimum bet of P3,300, said host Rolly Ligon. A brand-new Toyota Avanza 1.5 awaits the fastest-win champion. A participant may field an entry during the 2-cock elimination rounds on Feb. 22, 24 and 26. Qualifiers will then slug it out for the title on Feb. 28. For inquiries, call 851-2275, 833-1638 or 852-9812.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1— (Qrt/Tri)—Shipman (5), Batang Westside (8), Xtreme Heat (6), Nature Chef (1)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Nico's Incharge (1), Mary Jane Bomb (10), Beautiful Jaeda (3), Red Phoenix (5), Sovereign Dancer (6)
Race 3—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Swiss Alps/Que Fraca (5), Romanticist (12), Sharp And Deadly (9), Fuego (13), Jade Express (3), Ray Moon Star (8)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Showman (5), I Miss You (1), Regal Kiss/Class Action (4), Just A Moment (2)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—House Of Riches (6), Real Tough (5), Chabacana (7), Tellmenolies (1), Refreshing (2)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Strong Boy (10), Striker (5), Eskapo (8), Step On The Gas (6), Striking Cat/Prospector's Cat (4)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Astimegoesby (3), Awesome Power (6), Richie Rich (2), Mucho Macho (4)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Divine Diva/Pabilio Express (1), Love Song (2), Miss Vicky (5), Don King (8), Virgin Island (7), Golden Harry (11)

All pro-team for Seaba event top option–Eala

By June Navarro

THE LIKES of Erik Menk (left) and Asi Taulava will most likely represent the country in the Seaba. PDI PHOTO

PRESSED FOR TIME, THE BAP-SAMAHANG BASKETBOL NG PILIPINAS might settle for an all-professional squad to the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championships.

Though no definite agreement has been reached on the formation of the national team to the Kuala Lumpur joust in May, all indications point to that direction after the meeting among the country's top basketball chiefs Monday night.

PBA commissioner Noli Eala said sending a PBA-backed team is one of the top options being considered to boost the national squad's comeback stint in the international scene.

Under the BAP-SBP charter, a five-man committee composed of three directors from the collegiate sector and two from the commercial sector will have the sole authority to form the team for the Seaba.

"But because of the less-ideal situation, everybody is biased towards putting the best team now," said Eala, who attended the top-level meeting at the PLDT office.

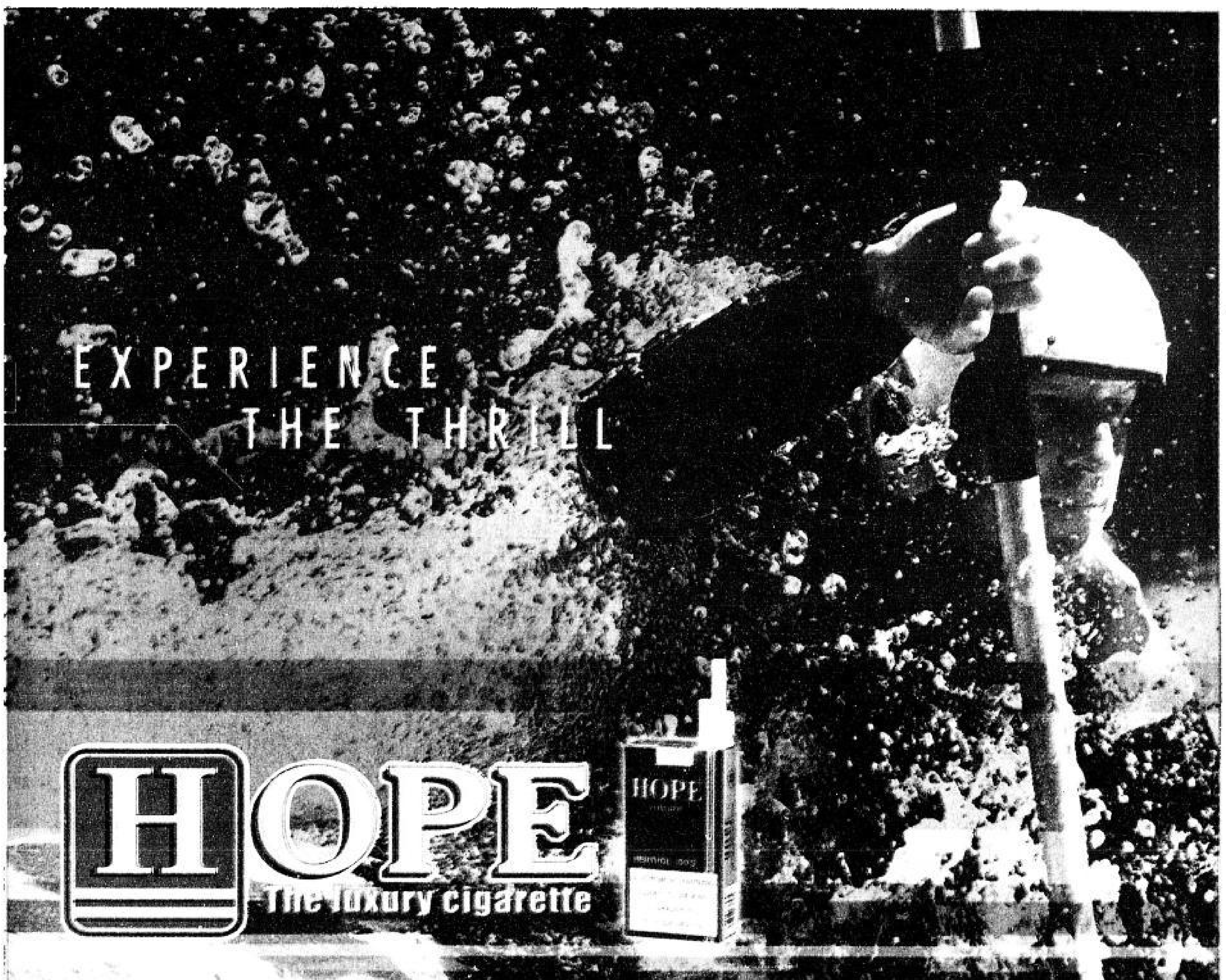
BAP-SBP president Manny V. Pangilinan presided over the meeting that was supposed to tackle the composition of the national team for two coming tournaments critical to the country's bid to be in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

But the group, which also included PBA chair Ricky Vargas, national coach Chot Reyes and San Miguel Corp. chief of basketball operations Robert Non, deferred its decision pending the formation of the selection committee.

Pangilinan will convene the BAP-SBP board to name the five-man committee, which could include Bernie Atienza, Junjun Capistrano, Fritz Gaston and Christian Tan from the collegiate sector.

The list would also include BAP-SBP directors Lito Alvarez, Chino Trinidad, Michele Lhuillier and Wilson Young from the commercial sector.

"In the situation where we're in right now, the Seaba can be used as a part of the training for the team going to the Fiba-Asia," said Eala. "It's an ideal setup."



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Reynante rules Tagaytay race

LLOYD REYNANTE SHOWED FINE FORM IN topping the massed start event of the third Pista ng Pag-ibig-Eagle of the Mountain Cycling Challenge yesterday in Tagaytay City.

A former national rider, Reynante clocked three hours, 53 minutes and 33.12 seconds in winning the 165-km race, hosted by Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino, that started and ended at the Tagaytay International Convention Center.

Ronnel Hualda checked in second in 3:55:35.27, followed by former Tour champions Victor Espiritu (3:56:57.61) and Arnel Quirimit (3:57:16.22) and Baler Ravina (3:57:16.22).

The two-day event also features today's 40-km individual time trial over the same route used in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Rounding out the top 10 were Ericson Obosa (3:58:37.20), Rey Martin (3:58:37.20), John Mark Guevarra (3:59:17.44), Eusebio Quinones (3:59:31.82) and Lito Atilano (3:59:42.63).

Tolentino flagged off close to 300 riders in yesterday's massed start.

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WEEK 2 • NOV 6, 2006
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2. GABRIEL SANCHEZ - CEBU
Round Trip ticket for 2 to an Asian destination with 3D & 2N accommodation
3. ROGELIO CARIASO - BENGUET
Canon Ixus Digital Camera

WEEK 3 • NOV 13, 2006
1. GENA QUILANA - DAVAO
A year's supply of Caltex with Techron Gasoline c/o StarCash*
2. NERISSA A. LIMBAG - MUNTINLUPA
Round Trip ticket for 2 to an Asian destination with 3D & 2N accommodation
3. ARMANDO ORTENCIO - PARAÑAQUE
Canon Ixus Digital Camera

WEEK 4 • NOV 20, 2006
1. ROUMEL F. DILLA - LAGUNA
A year's supply of Caltex with Techron Gasoline c/o StarCash*
2. JOEL S. ESCANO - TARLAC
Round Trip ticket for 2 to an Asian destination with 3D & 2N accommodation
3. ALVIN ESGUERRA - STA. MESA MM
Canon Ixus Digital Camera

WEEK 5 • NOV 27, 2006
1. ZELLA FLORES - CAVITE
A year's supply of Caltex with Techron Gasoline c/o StarCash*
2. HART LOVE RABAYA - DAVAO
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3. NELSON L. HERNANDEZ - OR. MINDORO
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WEEK 6 • DEC 4, 2006
1. ROMULO R. BRILLANTES JR. - BAGUIO
A year's supply of Caltex with Techron Gasoline c/o StarCash*
2. RODELIO E. TORRES - MANDALUYONG
Round Trip ticket for 2 to an Asian destination with 3D & 2N accommodation
3. JONALD REYES - CALOOCAN
Canon Ixus Digital Camera

WEEK 7 • DEC 11, 2006
1. SHERYLLE LOPEZ - QUEZON CITY
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2. GLENN DALE C. BANDONG - MARIKINA
Round Trip ticket for 2 to an Asian destination with 3D & 2N accommodation
3. SALVADOR G. MIRASOL - STA. CRUZ MLA.
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WEEK 8 • DEC 18, 2006
1. SALVADOR L. LANZUELA - TAGUIG
A year's supply of Caltex with Techron Gasoline c/o StarCash*
2. JOFFREY AGAYO BETOCLONG - BAGUIO
Round Trip ticket for 2 to an Asian destination with 3D & 2N accommodation
3. PONCIANO NUÑEZ - NUEVA ECIJA
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WEEK 9 • DEC 28, 2006
1. ROMEO GRAELLOS - ANTIQUE
A year's supply of Caltex with Techron Gasoline c/o StarCash*
2. PROSPERO C. NOBLE JR. - TAGUIG
Round Trip ticket for 2 to an Asian destination with 3D & 2N accommodation
3. WILFREDO G. LIMSON - PAMPANGA
Canon Ixus Digital Camera

WEEK 10 • JAN 3, 2007
1. JOCEL GOZAR - LAGUNA
A year's supply of Caltex with Techron Gasoline c/o StarCash*
2. VIRGILIO MOJARES - LIPA CITY
Round Trip ticket for 2 to an Asian destination with 3D & 2N accommodation
3. BRAXTON DANNANG - LAS PIÑAS
Canon Ixus Digital Camera

WEEK 11 • JAN 8, 2007
1. MELBA LAO - CAGAYAN DE ORO
A year's supply of Caltex with Techron Gasoline c/o StarCash*
2. JOSE ANTONIO S. ANONAS - MAKATI
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3. BEN CARLO BARCELONA - PARAÑAQUE
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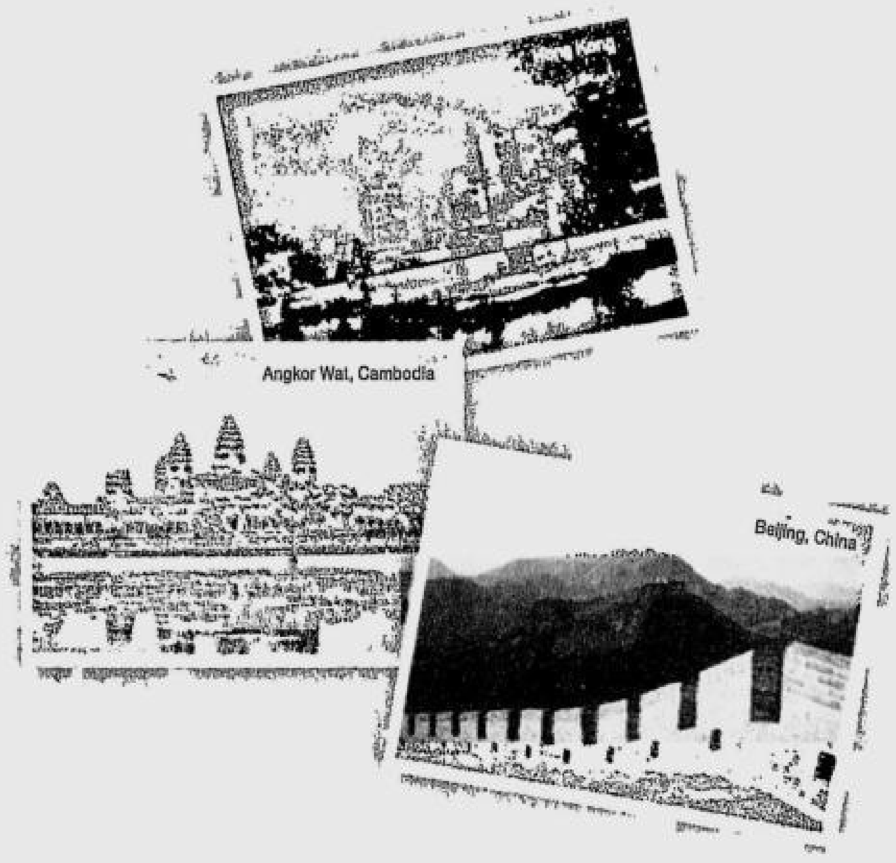

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What's better than watching the AXN Amazing Race show on TV? For Caltex's customers, it was getting the chance to win amazing prizes every week for 12 weeks by joining the Caltex with Techron®'s Amazing Craze raffle promo! While the Amazing Race Asia was blowing across countries in Southeast Asia, something exciting was also brewing at Caltex.

Taking off from the popular AXN reality TV show, Caltex's The Amazing Craze Promo gave motorists a chance to win big prizes by simply gassing up and enjoying the various amenities at Caltex stations. Within a span of three months, a total of 33 lucky Caltex customers from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao won one of the following awesome prizes: 11 Canon Ixus digital cameras, 11 trips for two to a top Asian destination that came with free airfare and accommodation and 11 Starcash prepaid gascards valued at Php 100,000!

Two lucky motorists bagged the grand raffle prizes for their regular patronage of Caltex stations and using Caltex with Techron®. GERARDO MARFIL, Jr. from Iloilo became the happy winner of an all-expense paid trip good for two to the following romantic hotspots: Hongkong, Beijing and Angkor Wat.

The Amazing Craze mega winner is REYNALDO REYES from Manila-- a very hard-working 30 year old lad who up to now still found it hard to believe he won a brand new Chevrolet Trailblazer worth P2 million, tax free! As an added bonus, he also got a free full tank of Caltex with Techron® worth P100,000 to power his car for a year.

Truly the Caltex with Techron® Amazing Craze was a journey of excitement, fun, surprises, and much delight. Caltex kicked off the promotion at the SM Mall of Asia that showcased a mini-version of the game show. Mallers got a taste of some AXN Amazing race challenges, some of which were sponsored by Caltex.

Caltex StarCard fleetcard clients as well as private motorists also had a taste of what it was like to be an Amazing race contestant for a one-day competition. And yes, they also did some pretty unthinkable, funny, quirky stuff just like their counterparts on the AXN TV reality TV game show to complete their challenges. Only in this particular race, everybody is a sure winner! (To get more info on how to avail of StarCard Fleetcard, please log on to www.starcard.com.ph)

But what made this raffle promo really amazing was that the less privileged members of the society also became winners alongside the lucky Caltex motorists. The Amazing Craze promo mechanics required Caltex customers to send SMS entries. For every text message sent in as a promo entry to the Amazing Craze, Caltex donated one peso to the cause of giving street children a better future under the Caltex Fund Street-to-School program. (For more information about this flagship program of Chevron Philippines, please log on to www.caltex.com.ph)

Like the champions of the reality game show, the Amazing Craze winners can now look forward to an exciting journey to a better future, thanks to Caltex with Techron®.

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Gov't decides to rebid Transco

Move to push back privatization by another year

By Michelle V. Remo and Abigail L. Ho

MORE THAN A WEEK AFTER DECLARING THE PUBLIC bidding for the 25-year National Transmission Corp. (Transco) concession a failure, the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) has decided to do another public auction.

"To ensure that the public has full confidence in the integrity and transparency of the government's process with regard to the privatization of Transco, the PSALM board has decided to conduct another bidding," PSALM said in a statement issued yesterday.

"We consider the failed bidding conducted last Feb. 5 indicative of recurring issues that we need to urgently and effectively address before undertaking another bidding process. We will devel-

GOV'T/B2

IN THIS ISSUE
▨ **Planned national** vehicle backed /B3
▨ **T-bond rate** drops to 5.98% /B8

BSP drafting incentives package for OFWs

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS IS working with banks on a package of fresh incentives to encourage more overseas Filipino workers to course remittances through the banking system—including preferential terms on deposits and loans.

In a report to Malacañang on initiatives to improve the environment for millions of Filipinos working overseas, the BSP said it was undertaking projects to enable banks "to compile and identify OFW accounts with the view to granting special incentives to OFWs."

Among the incentives would be zero maintaining balance for deposits and lower interest rate on loans, the report said.

To make pricing of remittance charges more transparent for OFWs, the BSP is also set to put up a portal that will link the individual websites of remittance service providers and make this available to the public.

The portal seeks to promote competition and drive down remittance costs. Earlier, the BSP required banks and financial institutions to post remittance charges, classification of costs and other relevant remittance information for the benefit of the OFWs and their beneficiaries.

To further expand access of OFWs and their beneficiaries to financial services, particularly for those residing in remote areas, the BSP is also reviewing a draft circular clarifying existing

BSP/B2

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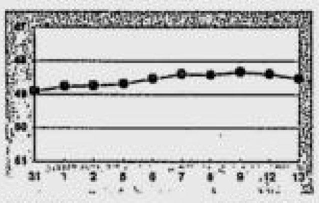

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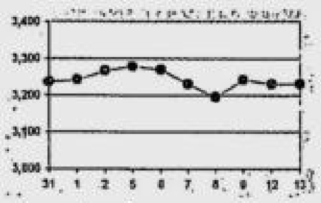
STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close flat

SHARE PRICES CLOSED FLAT YESTERDAY as investors cashed in gains in blue chips to buy into second- and third-line stocks, dealers said.

They said investors traded cautiously, given extended losses on Wall Street and political uncertainties as the campaign season for the mid-term elections in May officially started yesterday.

The composite index slipped 0.25 points points at 3,233.91 after trading between 3,223.97 and 3,241.63. The broader all-share index rose 2.25 points to 2,041.14.

Gainers led losers 71 to 48 with 55 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 3.15 billion shares worth P5.06 billion.

"The market remains in a consolidation mode," Accord Capital Equities analyst Lawrence de Leon said.

"Investors are moving to second and third-liners with healthy fundamentals," he added.

PLDT fell P35 to P2,485 but top-traded Metropolitan Bank Trust Co. rose a peso to P63.50.

Among second-liners, Benpres Holdings Corp. was still among the top picks, gaining another 15 centavos to settle at P4.10. The stock has gained 90 percent since the start of the year.

"Sentiment toward Benpres has improved because all the companies under the conglomerate are now in good shape," De Leon said.

Benpres' units include listed First Philippine Holdings Corp., which owns several

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Finance cautions Congress on tax amnesty bill

Better implementation of existing laws pushed

By Michelle V. Remo

WHILE IT STOPPED SHORT OF opposing the tax amnesty bill passed by the Senate, the Department of Finance stressed that caution should be exercised in its implementation to avoid defeating the goal of curbing tax evasion.

"Tax amnesties should not be given as a regular offering for taxpayers. Otherwise, they will just wait for the next amnesty to pay lower amount of taxes," Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said in an interview.

The finance official said that implementing another tax amnesty was all right so long as the government was sure it would be the last.

The Senate passed last week the tax amnesty bill that will allow tax evaders to escape prosecution if they pay the government an amount equivalent to 5 percent of their net worth.

Individuals and corporate taxpayers that have pending criminal tax cases, however, will not be allowed to apply for a tax amnesty. Those who violated the Anti-Money Laundering law and the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act will are also not eligible under the tax amnesty.

The bill, which is up for deliberations in the bicameral conference committee of Congress, covers tax deficiencies from 2005 and prior years. To avail oneself of the tax amnesty, one should submit a statement of his or her assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) as of Dec. 31, 2005.

While not openly opposing the tax amnesty bill, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said he believed it was not appropriate for the DOF to push for its passage either. He said the implementation of measures to improve tax administration should be the government's priority.

Legislators pushing for the bill, led by Sen. Ralph Recto of the Senate ways and means committee, said the objective of the tax amnesty bill was to shore up revenue collection and expand the taxpayer information database of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Estimates by the DOF said the tax amnesty bill could generate P13 billion in additional revenues for the government from the payment of amnesty taxes by tax evaders. The SALNs to be submitted by amnesty applicants are also seen to improve the BIR's database.

But Beltran said generating one-time revenues for the government might not be worth the effort if the tax amnesty bill would simply encourage other individuals to be tax delinquents and to simply wait for the next amnesty before paying taxes.

Should there be another tax amnesty, he said, the BIR must be able to maximize the use of the SALNs submitted by amnesty applicants in upgrading their database for future tax audit purposes.

The government had legislated several tax amnesties during the Marcos and Aquino presidencies, and some administratively implemented amnesties in later administrations.

In a research paper on the implementation of past tax amnesty laws, the DOF said these contributed insignificantly to the tax collection of the BIR.

The biggest revenue impact was recorded in 1973 when the tax amnesty implemented at that time accounted for 14 percent of the BIR's total tax collection. Tax amnesty laws in other years only contributed anywhere from less than 1-2 percent of the BIR's tax collection, the DOF added.

"Because tax amnesties have practically been a yearly affair in the past, collections were relatively minimal," the DOF said.

Gov't decides to rebid Transco

From page B1

op a concrete plan of action and find ways to enhance the value of the asset for the next bidding," PSALM said in a statement.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said that while the government had the option of simply entering into a negotiated sale with the lone bidder during the failed auction last Feb. 5, it was more prudent to do a rebidding of the concession, which is valued at P138 billion.

Teves, who also sits as PSALM chair, said his office would first seek from Congress a franchise to operate Transco before rebidding the country's sole electric power transmission firm. This way, he said, more prospective investors would be attracted to participate in the bidding.

But since Congress is already in recess and because of the coming elections in May, Teves said asking for a franchise would take some time, adding that the decision of the PSALM board to first get a franchise from Congress and rebid the power asset could push back the privatization by a year.

In a separate statement, Energy Secretary and PSALM vice chair Raphael Lotilla said that after weighing all the issues that prompted the two other pre-qualified bidders—the consortium of local firm Triratna Holdings Corp. (60 percent), Malaysia's Tenaga Nasional Berhad (5 percent) and Newbridge Asia IV LP (35 percent) and the group of Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. (60 percent) and China's State Grid Corp. (40 percent), represented by Walter Brown—not to submit final bids, the PSALM board had no other recourse but to decide on a rebid.

"The PSALM board weighed the different issues arising from a rebid and came to the conclusion that maintaining the integrity and transparency of the process through an open and competitive bidding will ensure the stability of the Transco concession contract over its 25-year life," he said.

The failed bidding last Feb. 5 was the third since 2003. While there were three pre-qualified bidders, only one submitted its technical and financial bids.

For its part, the Citadel-Terna group said it would no longer participate in this public bidding, the fourth for the Transco concession.

Citadel senior vice president Rogelio Singson said in a telephone interview that his company was not likely to seek another foreign partner to again try its luck at bagging the Transco contract.

"We can no longer find anyone else. We had some of the best in the industry before, from Europe and North America. Honestly, it's been very difficult trying to convince US and European investors to invest here because the rules keep changing in the middle of the game," he said.

He added that there was no guarantee that the government would get a good deal out of this new round of public bidding, noting how the Citadel-Terna group, had the PSALM board agreed to just negotiate with it, would have given the government a fair offer for the concession.

"We weren't even going to bargain with them. We had a sealed bid. They could have just opened that, together with the envelope containing the reserve price for the concession, and we could have just gone from there," he said. "We do mean business."

Asked how Terna officials reacted after getting wind that there would be a re-bid, he said they were "shocked and disturbed."

Peter Favila, a member of the PSALM board, said the decision to rebid the concession for Transco was backed by the business community.

"The decision of the board reflects the sentiment of the business community. They said that to ensure the integrity and transparency of the (privatization) process, the better option was to do a rebidding," Favila said in the same briefing.

BSP drafting incentives . . .

From page B1

regulations on banks and non-bank financial institutions in implementing the know-your-customer (KYC) policy and ensuring compliance with the Anti-Money Laundering Act.

"The circular aims to simplify and standardize acceptable identification documents required by banks from their clients," the BSP reported.

For their part, the BSP reported that some commercial banks had offered OFWs specialized investment products and services related to insurance, pension and real estate.

"Direct payment schemes of banks are also available for the added convenience of the OFWs' beneficiaries," the BSP noted.

To improve the payments and settlement systems and thereby reduce transaction costs, the BSP reported that it had undertaken the following initiatives in 2006: granting of foreign currency deposit unit (FCDU) licenses to rural banks and cooperative banks; full interconnection of major automated teller machine networks since last June, and approval of alternative modes of remittances using advanced technology such as cash cards as well as mobile telecommunication companies' Smart Padala and G-Cash products.

The BSP is also pursuing bilateral commitments under the Philippine-United States Memorandum of Intent on strengthening remittance channels, as well as possible international negotiations on payments systems and market access of Philippine banks, non-bank financial institutions and money transfer offices through counterpart central banks.

Shares close flat

From page B1

power plants that supply part of the requirements of power distributor Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), and First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp., which is engaged in tollway operations.

AFP

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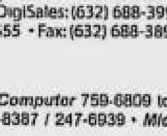

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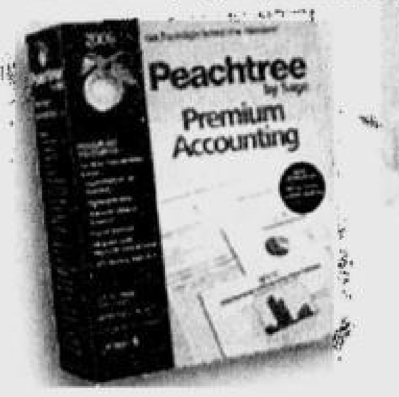

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Planned national vehicle backed

Proposed price ceiling for PhUV set at P350,000

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FRANCISCO MOTORS CORP. yesterday said it had joined efforts of domestic auto parts makers to push for a program that will pave the way for the production of Philippine Utility Vehicles.

The PhUV, which is to become the country's national vehicle, is envisioned as an AUV-based unit designed to carry both cargoes and passengers, making it ideal for business use on weekdays and family use on weekends.

The Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturers Association, which is expected to come out with the PhUV prototype soon, said the national vehicle should be sold for not more than P350,000 and should have local content of at least 60 percent.

This is expected to support the growth of the local parts making industry.

Rosauro Francisco, company president and chief executive, said Francisco Motors made the decision following talks with the MVPMAP.

"We are optimistic about this program that MVPMAP initiated and which the Board of Investments supports," Francisco said. "For a pioneer company in the local auto industry, this is a welcome development."

The company is supporting calls for the provision of incentives to investors who will get involved in the assembly of a new people's car.

The 60-year-old, all-Filipino firm blazed a trail in the manufacturing of public utility jeepneys (PUJs); popularized the locally assembled Mazda B220 pickup truck and the Anfra, as well as the Filipino versions of Asian Utility Vehicles.

Francisco Motors also gained prominence when it was commissioned to make the Popemobile for Pope John Paul II's second visit to the country in 1995.

"We believe (the PhUV effort) is a positive step in the right direction and is in line with the vision of Francisco Motors to help develop the local auto industry," Francisco said.

"In fact, we are now in the midst of developing our own version and prototype of the PhUV, with the full support of MVPMAP and its members," he added.

MVPMAP hopes the PhUV Program could help boost sales and revive the local auto industry, whose growth had remained flat in the last eight years.

MVPMAP director Ferdinand I. Raquelsantos, who heads the association's PhUV technical working group, said the group invested in the design, development and fabrication of a PhUV prototype at its own expense for the sake of some 44,000 workers who were dependent on the local parts making industry and its support industries.

Chemrez sees increase in biodiesel exports

By Abigail L. Ho

BIODIESEL MANUFACTURER Chemrez Technologies Inc. expects to earn about P70 million from the exportation of 1.6 million liters of its BioActiv premium coco-biodiesel product to Germany this month.

In a statement issued yesterday, ChemrezTech chief operating officer Dean Lao Jr. said the agreed price for the shipment to ChemSynergy AG was placed at $900 for every 1,000 liters.

ChemSynergy, ChemrezTech's exclusive marketing agent in Europe, is a trading firm specializing in oleochemicals, including biodiesel.

Additional shipments to Germany will be made in April, Lao said.

The company started exportation in commercial quantity to Germany following several successful trial shipments to Rotterdam, the entry point for Germany's oil imports, last year.

He said the quality of ChemrezTech's coco-biodiesel product surpassed the DIN-EN-14214, the European Union's biodiesel specification.

He added that ChemrezTech's BioActiv was compliant with EURO3 fuel standards. Philippine diesel was only EURO1-compliant.

ChemSynergy provides biodiesel to German fuel distributors that supply fleet accounts, as well as some oil companies for blending with pure diesel.

Following this shipment to Germany and its planned shipment in April, he said ChemrezTech was now planning to improve its distribution channels so it could expand to other European countries that mandated the use of biodiesel, including Italy, Spain, France and Belgium.

Fitch upgrades credit outlook on RCBC to 'positive'

By Doris C. Dumlao

LONDON-BASED FITCH RATINGS YESTERDAY raised its credit rating outlook on the Yuchengcos' Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. from "stable" to "positive," given the bank's capital build-up program and the appointment of Lorenzo Tan as its new chief executive officer.

In a press statement yesterday, Fitch said it had upgraded the outlook on the long-term foreign and local currency issuer default ratings of RCBC while affirming all other ratings as follows: long-term foreign and local currency rating "BB-" (BB minus), individual rating "D/E" and Support "3."

The revision follows the bank's announcement that it plans to raise a substantial amount of common capital in the first half of the year.

A "positive" outlook indicates a high probability of a credit rating upgrade within the next 12 to 24 months.

RCBC plans to beef up its capital by P7 billion via an additional public offering.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has approved the issuance of 250 common shares by RCBC, bank director Cesar Virata said.

"There were also a number of other recent positive developments at the bank, including two hybrid capital raising activities in the last quarter of 2006 and appointment of Lorenzo Tan as its new CEO," Fitch said.

Fitch acknowledged Tan's substantial experience in distressed asset management and his role as the instigator of the aggressive reforms now in place for Philippine National Bank following a stint as president there.

"Like all banks in the Philippines, RCBC is benefiting from the country's improved operating environment, with the government's position strengthened by an improved fiscal situation and the ongoing buoyancy of the economy," Fitch said.

RCBC raised P6.5 billion in the last quarter of 2006. This, along with a good level of net profitability, boosted the bank's equity base to P24.5 billion from P13.2 billion at end-2005, it said.

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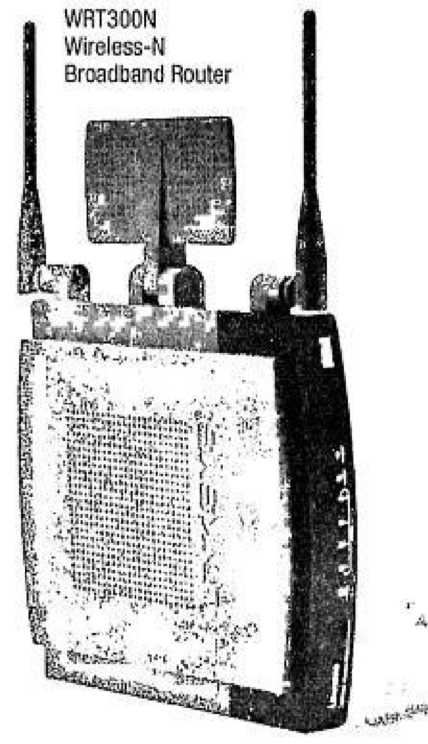

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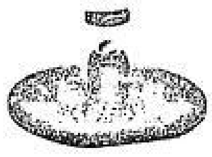

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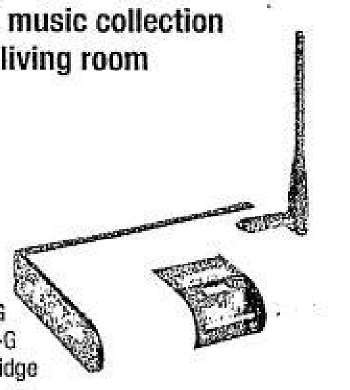

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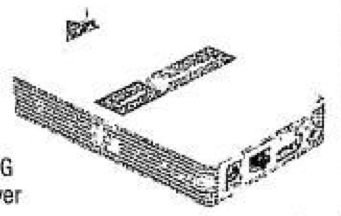

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Jinchuan eyes tie-up with Tan firm

China giant expresses interest in Macroasia's nickel resources

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

JINCHUAN GROUP LTD., China's largest producer of nickel and cobalt, is closely looking at the prospects of MacroAsia Corp.'s nickel mine in Palawan, the listed company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The due diligence was an offshoot of the meeting between Jinchuan chair Li Yong-Jun and taipan Lucio C. Tan in November 2006. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo personally introduced and arranged the meeting between the two executives during her state visit to China last year.

In the said meeting, Li and Tan discussed the possibility of "mutual cooperation" between the Jinchuan Group and MacroAsia, a member of the Lucio Tan Group of Companies.

MacroAsia also said Jinchuan had fielded a four-man team consisting of geologists and mining engineers for two months to Brookes Point, Palawan to conduct the due diligence studies on MacroAsia's nickel mine site.

While the due diligence is ongoing, MacroAsia executives are in China to observe the Chinese mining firm's massive operations in what is known as "Nickel City" in Gansu Province.

While primarily engaged in aviation-related services, publicly-listed MacroAsia inherited its mining rights from Cobertson Holdings Corp., formerly Infanta Mineral & Industrial Corp.

In March last year, MacroAsia said it had obtained a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau covering 1,114 hectares of land in Brookes Point, Palawan. This gives MacroAsia the exclusive right to explore, develop and use for commercial purposes nickel, chromite, iron and other associated mineral deposits that may be found in the area.

The MPSA is good for 25 years from date of issuance, renewable for another term not exceeding 25 years.

Jinchuan Group Ltd. is a giant mining corporation that produces nickel, copper, cobalt, rare and precious metals. It is also into the production of chemical products such as sulfuric acid, caustic soda, liquid chlorine, hydrochloric acid and sodium sulfite.

Jinchuan's nickel and platinum group metals production account for more than 90 percent of China's total production.

Reinsurance firm set to brave stock market

NATIONAL REINSURANCE Corp. of the Philippines (National Re) is planning to brave the local stock market by April this year through a public offering.

It is hoping to raise up to P3 billion in fresh capital to expand its business in Asia and at home, sources close to the company said.

Reinsurance is an agreement whereby an insurance company transfers part or all of its risk of loss under insurance policies with another insurance company.

Sources said National Re is hoping to raise between P2 and P3 billion to expand its core capital and grab a chunk of the reinsurance business in the Asean market, where companies' capital requirements must be at least $100 million.

The company is tapping BDO Capital to be its issue manager, sources also said.

National Re is a product of the merger of the country's three largest reinsurers. Universal Reinsurance Corp. of Bank of the Philippine Islands and Malayan Reinsurance Corp. of the Yuchengcos formed Universal Malayan Reinsurance Corp (UM-Re) in January 2004. Later that year, UMRe merged with National Re to form the country's biggest domestic reinsurer, with National Re as the surviving entity.

As of 2005, the company has total assets of P4.4 billion, according to the company's annual report for the year.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

First Pac moves for solo purchase of PTIC shares

By Riza T. Olchondra

FIRST PACIFIC CO. Limited yesterday announced its intention to match on its own a P25.2-billion bid for the Philippine government's 46-percent stake in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC).

Buying the government shares would increase the Hong Kong conglomerate's stake in Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT).

In a disclosure to the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited, First Pacific said it would exercise its right to match a P25.2-billion bid for the government's entire stake in PTIC "by entering into ... a conditional sale and purchase agreement with the Philippine Government not later than Feb. 28, 2007."

First Pacific had originally planned to buy the government shares, together with strategic partner NTT DoCoMo. The two companies initially agreed to split the financial burden equally.

However, First Pacific itself had only until Feb. 1 to match the bid of P25.2 billion for the PTIC shares. It said it could not complete talks with NTT by then. First Pacific also lacked the needed approval of its stockholders for a solo takeover at the time.

Under government bidding rules, First Pacific can match the bid through PTIC until March 2, if it gets shareholder approval on Feb. 28.

Apart from First Pacific's disclosure to the Hong Kong bourse, a notice announcing the special meeting said that shareholders need to vote on an "ordinary resolution."

According to the notice, an executive director of First Pacific would be authorized to complete the acquisition in a manner that he may consider "necessary or desirable or expedient."

The resolution also proposed to authorize First Pacific subsidiary Metro Pacific Assets Holdings, Inc. to enter into a sale and purchase agreement with the Philippine government to complete the acquisition.

First Pacific managing director Manuel V. Pangilinan said last month that "it may be more expedient to acquire 100 percent of the (111,415) shares without NTT."

The Hong Kong conglomerate already controls PTIC with a 56-percent stake, while the government owns 46 percent. The government's shares in PTIC translate to a 6.4 percent stake in PLDT. Acquiring it would enable First Pacific to tighten its hold on the country's largest telco.

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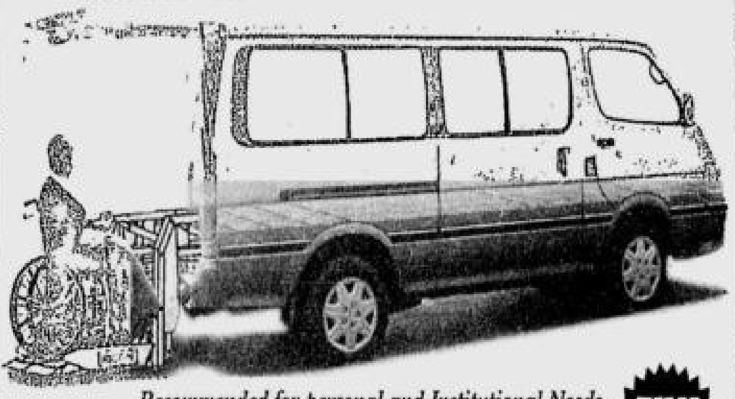

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STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	8.2	8.2	8	8.2	91,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	56.5	58	56.5	58	580,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	70	70	69	69.5	1,667,500
China Banking Corp.	775	780	775	775	4,630
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	5,350,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	101	106	101	106	185,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	63	64	63	63.5	6,914,800
Philippine National Bank	49.5	49.5	49	49	15,900
Phil. Savings Bank	57	57	55.5	55.5	7,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	42	42	41	41.5	425,800
Security Bank Corp.	77.5	78	77.5	78	717,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	61.5	62	61	62	13,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	110,000
Citiseconline Com Inc.	5	5.1	5	5.1	1,309,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	32	32	32	32	13,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1660	1650	1660	750
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.88	1.92	1.88	1.9	414,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	490	492.5	490	490	2,400
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2080	2105	2080	2105	1,700
Ivantage Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.66	1,302,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.3	33,299,000
First Gen Corp.	56	56	54.5	54.5	2,966,600
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	80	82.5	80	82.5	995,100
Manila Electric Co. A	77	79.5	77	79.5	494,300
Manila Electric Co. B	78.5	80	78.5	79.5	3,970,500
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.7	9.8	1,542,000
Petron Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.45	4.5	6,477,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.28	1,050,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.26	1.26	1.22	1.22	1,866,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	22,000
CADP Group Corp.	2	2	2	2	8,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24.75	25.5	24.75	25.5	102,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	43.5	43.5	42.5	43	564,900
Pancake House Inc.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	30,000
RFM Corp.	1.38	1.38	1.36	1.36	150,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.65	2.7	1,001,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	210,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64.5	64.5	64.5	64.5	41,700
San Miguel Corp. B	79.5	79.5	79	79	76,400
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc	2.08	2.08	2.04	2.04	1,235,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.5	4,682,800
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.54	1.66	1.52	1.64	40,333,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.45	4.45	4.4	4.4	1,466,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	66,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8	8.1	7.9	8	5,983,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.9	6.2	5.8	6.2	1,593,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.2	5,524,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.28	27,120,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	5,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Asia Amalgamated Holdings	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.48	110,000
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	3,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	927,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	128,300,000
Ayala Corp.	630	630	615	620	213,610
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.71	0.72	0.71	0.72	370,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8	8.1	7.9	8.1	6,124,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.2	5.4	4.8	5	4,686,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	18,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	536,000
APC Group Inc.	0.41	0.43	0.41	0.43	42,040,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	17,400,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.22	1.22	2,060,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	45,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	118,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.24	1.3	1.24	1.3	125,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
Benpres Holdings Corp.	4	4.2	3.9	4.1	69,080,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	642,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	80,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5	4.9	4.9	600,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.32	690,000
House of Investments Inc.	3	3.2	2.8	2.9	456,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	11.5	12	11.5	12	7,722,500
Medco Holdings	0.4	0.41	0.38	0.38	490,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.38	0.44	0.38	0.43	28,810,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.3	6	6	1,559,000
Multitech Inv. Corp	2.24	2.3	2.2	2.22	3,845,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	28,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.26	0.22	0.25	38,030,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.97	1	0.97	1	80,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	78,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.165	0.175	0.165	0.175	42,790,000
SM Investments Corp.	385	385	382.5	385	711,100
South China Resources Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.14	1.14	220,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.8	1.82	1.72	1.72	566,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.145	0.155	0.145	0.155	6,550,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16.5	16.5	16.25	16.5	9,037,800
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	160,000
Belle Corp.	1.36	1.5	1.36	1.48	92,757,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.4	1,615,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	240,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.6	2,164,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	50,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	80,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.32	0.35	0.32	0.35	19,400,000
Elb Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.22	860,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.71	0.72	38,160,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.64	1.62	1.64	225,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.07	8,900,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.74	1.76	1.64	1.66	164,617,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.27	1,900,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.25	0.29	0.25	0.27	1,720,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	62,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	71,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.55	0.58	0.55	0.55	20,430,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.88	0.89	7,980,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.022	0.023	0.022	0.023	1,500,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.65	40,710,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.7	153,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	260,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.55	2.55	2.42	2.5	101,000
Primex Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	60,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	18.25	18.5	18	18.25	8,875,700
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.77	0.82	0.75	0.8	71,640,000
SM Development Corp.	3.6	3.75	3.6	3.75	1,204,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.75	7,338,800
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.63	0.66	50,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.12	15,250,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24	24.5	24	24.25	65,700
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	144,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	2	2.02	1.98	2	7,448,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1360	1380	1360	1380	54,540
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.8	6.9	6.7	6.7	1,446,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2520	2520	2485	2485	117,570
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.33	33,950,000
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	3,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.6	299,000
IPVG Corp.	4.85	5	4.8	4.85	2,276,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.055	0.06	11,400,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	100,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.44	2.5	2.36	2.38	1,013,000
Philweb Corp.	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	41,700,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.05	4.05	3.95	4	516,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	13,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	24.5	24.75	24	24.75	984,600
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.02	1.1	1.02	1.1	410,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	195,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.22	2.24	2.22	2.22	2,868,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.39	0.4	0.39	0.39	600,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.83	0.87	0.82	0.87	2,590,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	22,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.22	2.32	2.22	2.32	4,951,000
Paxys Inc.	26.5	27	25.5	26	2,502,600
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	625,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.4	5.6	5.4	5.6	305,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	147,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.4	9.5	9.4	9.4	910,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	27,000
Benguet Corp. B	34	35	34	35	1,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	28,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.14	1.34	1.14	1.2	220,136,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	3,580,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	1,070,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.026	184,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.031	0.031	0.03	0.03	97,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	53,400,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.9	3.9	2,006,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	360,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.74	0.76	0.74	0.76	860,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.46	1.48	1.42	1.42	4,552,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	7,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	48,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	15,500,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	48,500,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10	90,500

CURRENCIES

February 13, 2007

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.771307	1.000000	48.3520
Japan	Yen	0.006327	0.008203	0.3966
United Kingdom	Pound	1.502738	1.948300	94.2042
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098711	0.127979	6.1880
Switzerland	Franc	0.615470	0.797957	38.5828
Canada	Dollar	0.656544	0.851209	41.1577
Singapore	Dollar	0.500589	0.649013	31.3811
Australia	Dollar	0.595742	0.772380	37.3461
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.045908	2.652520	128.2546
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.205665	0.266645	12.8928
Brunei	Dollar	0.498970	0.646914	31.2796
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000111	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.023093	0.029940	1.4477
UAE	Dirham	0.210022	0.272294	13.1660
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.296500	62.6884
Korea	Won	0.000823	0.001067	0.0516
China	Yuan**	0.099434	0.128916	6.2333
Argentina	Peso	0.248408	0.322061	15.5723
Brazil	Real	0.364460	0.472523	22.8474
Denmark	Kroner	0.134218	0.174013	8.4139
India	Rupee	0.017530	0.022727	1.0989
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220859	0.286344	13.8453
Mexico	New Peso	0.069919	0.090650	4.3831
New Zealand	Dollar	0.528257	0.684885	33.1156
South Africa	Rand	0.105898	0.137297	6.6386
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023359	0.030285	1.4643

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Feb. 12, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Feb. 12, 2007

Japanese shares near 7-year high; dollar slips

SINGAPORE—JAPANESE STOCKS ended at their highest level in nearly seven years yesterday, led by companies that have reported strong earnings such as property firms, while the dollar slipped against the yen.

Oil held below $58 after sliding almost 3.5 percent on Monday and gold steadied after sharp losses overnight.

The dollar eased against the yen on profit-taking after approaching a four-year high the previous day after Group of Seven finance officials failed to signal any action to address the weakness of the Japanese currency.

Japan's Nikkei index rose 0.67 percent to its highest close since May 2000, driven by real estate firms that posted strong earnings last week, such as Mitsui Fudosan Co. Ltd., which jumped almost 7 percent.

Australian shares rose 0.2 percent to a record closing high. Gains were led by Alumina Ltd. and top banks such as National Australia Bank Ltd. ahead of its first-half earnings on Wednesday.

Asian stock markets in general were steady to lower after US stocks declined, with the Dow Jones average down 0.22 percent and the tech-heavy Nasdaq 0.38 percent lower.

MSCI's measure of Asia-Pacific stocks excluding Japan dropped 0.4 percent.

Seoul stocks settled up 0.3 percent as firms involved in inter-Korean tourist projects such as Hyundai Merchant Marine Co. attracted buyers hoping for a deal to resolve the dispute over North Korea's nuclear program.

Hong Kong fell 1.6 percent, driven lower by China Mobile amid fears of a possible share placement and by banks on talk that China's central bank could raise interest rates after the Lunar New Year break, starting this weekend.

Taiwan stocks lost 0.5 percent and Singapore inched down 0.3 percent.

The dollar shed 0.4 percent from late New York trade to 121.45 yen after climbing as high as 122.05 yen in the previous session, near a four-year peak of 122.20 yen touched in January.

The euro edged down to 157.47 yen from Monday's all-time high of 159.00 hit after the Group of Seven did not single out the yen's weakness, which suggested that the currency's exchange rate would be left to the market.

The rise in Tokyo stocks put pressure on Japanese government bonds (JGBs) and the yield on the five-year bond hit a one-month high.

JGBs were also under selling pressure ahead the release of fourth-quarter Japanese economic growth data and an upcoming Bank of Japan policy board meeting.

Japanese GDP due Thursday is expected to have risen 0.9 percent in October-December from the previous quarter, or an annualized 3.8 percent.

That would be the fastest growth in nearly three years and the eighth straight quarter of expansion.

Reuters

Oil holds below $58

SINGAPORE—OIL HOVERED BELOW $58 a barrel on Tuesday after it slid $2 the previous day on signs Opec will keep output stable when it meets in March.

US crude stood 8 cents up at $57.89 a barrel early yesterday afternoon, after sliding $2.08 or nearly 3.5 percent on Monday.

London Brent crude rose 21 cents to $56.81 a barrel.

Several Opec ministers have said there will be no need for more output cuts to add to pledged reductions of 1.7 million barrels per day, with Saudi Arabia's oil minister Ali al-Naimi saying the market was in better balance.

Heating oil futures led losses on Monday as a lack of further supply reductions would come at a time of fading US winter demand, despite a recent cold snap that has cut inventories.

"Opec is not likely to cut production so it would be difficult to see a big gain in oil prices," said Tetsu Emori, chief commodities strategist at Mitsui Bussan Futures Ltd.

Trade sources have said Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude exporter, will keep supplies steady to global oil majors in March, though Japanese refiners confirmed on Tuesday that the kingdom will lift March supplies to Asia.

While analysts say non-Opec supply is not increasing as quickly as expected, a UK oil industry survey reported on Tuesday that oil and gas supplies from Britain will rise this year for the first time since 1999.

Combined oil and gas output should rise by 200,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day (boepd) to 3.15 million boepd.

Reuters

Euro zone GDP ends '06 with a bang

PARIS—EUROPEAN ECONOMIC growth finished 2006 with a flourish as Germany broke into a sprint and France pulled out of a rut—setting the euro area in a good position to meet or even beat forecasts of a solid-if-slower 2007.

Driven by exports and internal demand, German growth surged to 0.9 percent growth in the October-December period versus the previous quarter, pushing the estimate for the year as a whole closer to 3 percent, a report from the statistics office showed.

"This is a very strong result," said BNP Paribas economist Frederique Cerisier. The euro gained almost a quarter of a cent versus the dollar in a few minutes after the news.

French gross domestic product grew anew in the last quarter, up 0.6-0.7 percent, marginally more than forecast, after halting abruptly in the previous three months. That put growth for 2006 as a whole at 2.0 percent, the statistics office there said.

The announcements from Germany and France, which account for 28 and 21 percent respectively of total euro zone GDP, preceded Spain, which marginally beat forecasts with a 1.1 percent rise.

None of that looked like a performance seriously damaged by the European Central Bank's increases in interest rates, another of which is expected in March.

Italy and the Netherlands were due to publish bare-bones GDP estimates too, before a first stab at GDP for the euro zone as a whole.

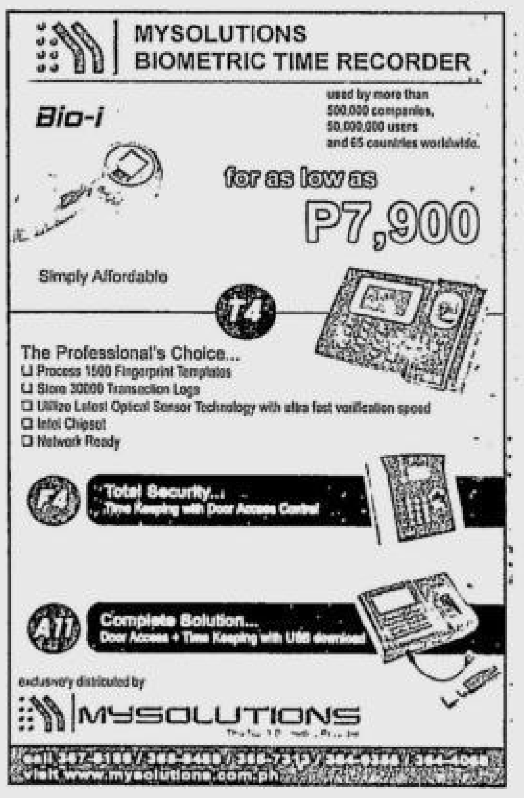
The euro zone report, which the European Commission was due to publish yesterday, was expected to show a marginal improvement in GDP growth, with the average at 0.6 percent growth in the fourth quarter, marginally higher than the third.

But that was a forecast made by economists on the assumption that German growth would be 0.6 percent on a quarter-on-quarter basis, not 0.9. Moreover, the forecasting-busting spurt came on top of a better third quarter than first reckoned.

Germany's Federal Statistics Office said that GDP rose 0.8 percent in the third quarter, quarter-on-quarter, and not the 0.6 originally estimated.

"In principle, that raises the starting point for the current year and thereby improves the prospects for orderly growth in 2007," said Ralph Solveen, an economist at Commerzbank.

The economy of the euro zone accelerated in 2006 to its best rate of expansion in six years, producing a rise in gross domestic product so far estimated at 2.6 percent, almost double the 1.4 percent growth rate of 2005. *Reuters*



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China seen growing 10.2%

SHANGHAI, CHINA—China's economy will grow at a rate of 10.2 percent for the first quarter of the year, a government think tank said Tuesday, down only slightly from 2006's whole-year growth rate of 10.7 percent.

The State Information Center predicted further slowing in the second quarter to 10.0 percent growth, as policies to cool the sizzling economy take effect.

Trade will continue to grow by double-digits in the first half of the year, while retail sales growth will remain above 14 percent, the center said in a report published in the newspaper China Securities Journal.

However, employment pressure will remain severe, especially among recent university graduates whose numbers have surged in recent years, it said. Changes in the global economy may also have a knock-on effect for China, the report said.

It said the consumer price index, a key indicator of inflation, will rise 3 percent in the first quarter and 3.5 percent in the second as increased prices for animal food send the cost of pork and poultry soaring, the report said. *AP*

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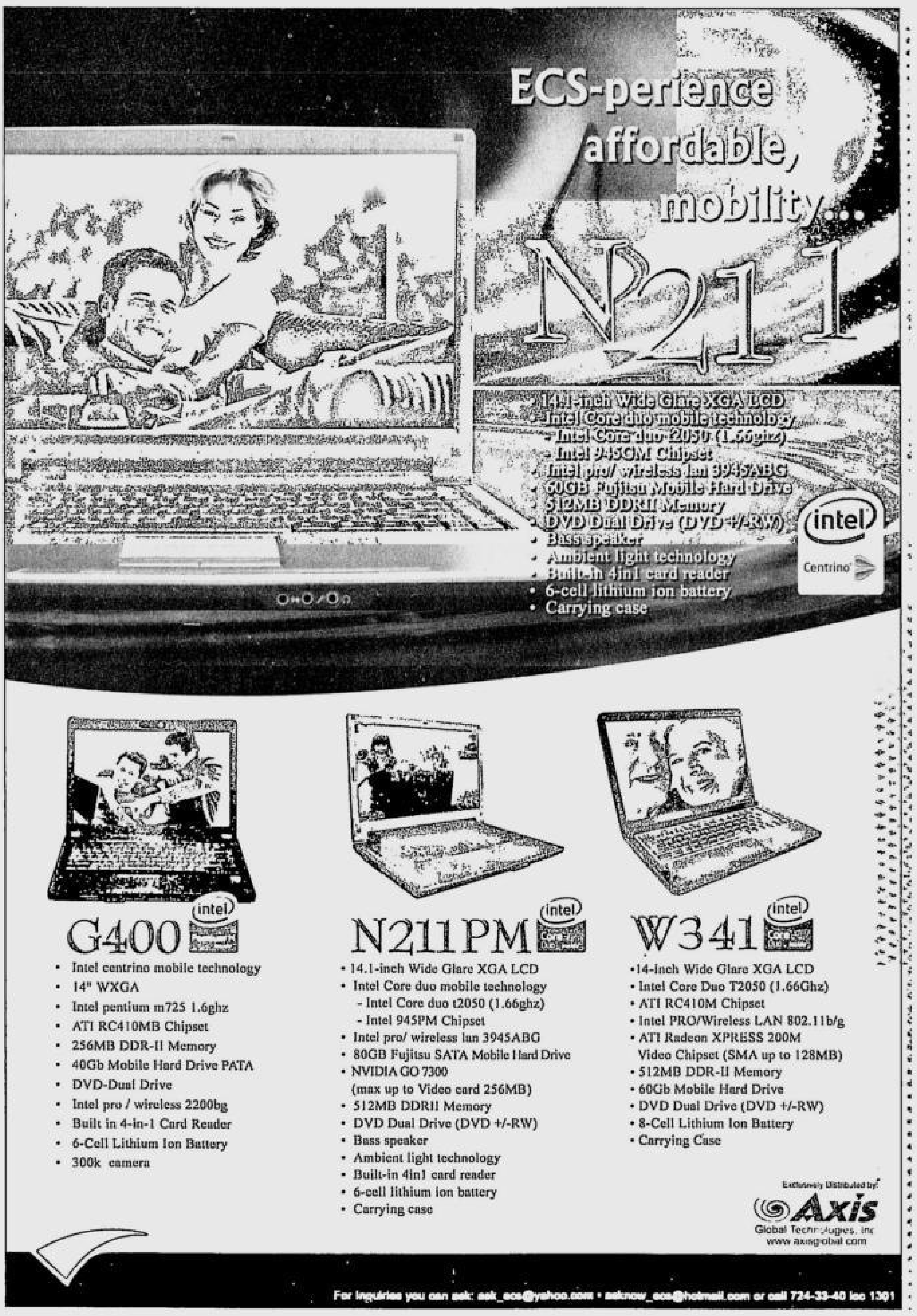

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- DVD Dual Drive (DVD +/-RW)
- Bass speaker
- Ambient light technology
- Built-in 4in1 card reader
- 6-cell lithium ion battery
- Carrying case

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Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Operation & Maintenance of Pump Stations, Water Distribution System, STP, & Transmission Lines at the Cavite Economic Zone

(PEZA-HO-2007-02)

1. The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY (PEZA), through its Corporate Budget for the CY 2007 intends to apply the sum of PhP7,304,718.13 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Operation & Maintenance of Pump Stations, Water Distribution System, STP, & Transmission Lines at the Cavite Economic Zone. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PEZA now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the operation and maintenance of CEZ's pump stations and sewerage treatment plants, its electro-mechanical components, equipment, safety devices, and control panel system twenty-four (24) hours daily. This includes the repair and maintenance of water and sewerage distribution/transmission lines, including installation/disconnection of water meters twenty-six (26) days each month for a period of one (1) year. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a single similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC and at least five (5) years experience in the operation and maintenance industry. In addition, bidders must have filed their latest annual income tax returns and business tax returns (VAT and/or Percentage Taxes for the previous 6 months) via the Electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS) of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from PEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from **14-28 February 2007, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays** from the address below upon submission of a certified copy of their Phil-GEPS Certificate of Registration and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos Only (PhP 5,000.00). The method of payment will be on a cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **06 March 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, PEZA Building, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **11:00 a.m. of 21 March 2007**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than *1% of the ABC*. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **21 March 2007 at 2:00 p.m.** at the 6th Floor Social Hall, PEZA Bldg. III, Roxas Blvd. corner San Luis St., Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
10. The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
3/F PEZA Building, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
Tel. No. 891-6444 / Telefax No. 551-9587
e-mail: peza_bac_secretariat@yahoo.com
website: www.peza.gov.ph

(PDI–February 14 & 21, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER (PICC)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER (PICC) will conduct public biddings for the projects with Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) as indicated below:

	Approved Budget for Contract (ABC)	PRE-BID CONFERENCE	BIDDING
I- SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND ONE-YEAR ON-SITE MAINTENANCE OF AUTOMATIC CHEMICAL-FREE SCALE REMOVING SYSTEM/S FOR COOLING TOWER MODULE 1, 2, 3, & 4	P6,800,000.00	March 8, 2007 11:00 a.m.	March 15, 2007 11:00 a.m.
II- SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND ONE-YEAR ON-SITE MAINTENANCE OF ONE (1) SET BALL-TYPE AUTOMATIC CONDENSER TUBE CLEANER FOR TWO (2) YORK CHILLER (NO. 1 & 4)	P3,780,000.00	March 7, 2007 10:30 a.m.	March 15, 2007 10:00 a.m.

Bids in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from BAC Secretariat of the PICC and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below anytime during office hours from February 21 to 28, 2007.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the PICC-BAC Secretariat upon payment of non-refundable fees in the amounts below indicated:

I- SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND ONE-YEAR ON-SITE MAINTENANCE OF AUTOMATIC CHEMICAL-FREE SCALE REMOVING SYSTEM/S FOR COOLING TOWER MODULE 1, 2, 3, & 4	P4,500.00
II- SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND ONE YEAR ON-SITE MAINTENANCE OF ONE (1) SET BALL-TYPE AUTOMATIC CONDENSER TUBE CLEANER FOR TWO (2) YORK CHILLDER (NO. 1 & 4)	P4,000.00

The method of payment will be in cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidders or authorized representative.

The PICC-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC)
PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER
CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City 1300
(082) 551-82-30 or (082) 551-79-20 loc. 7855 and 7149
Telefax No. (082) 551-68-73
BAC1@picc.gov.ph

(Sgd.) VICTORIA C. BERCILES
BAC Chairperson

(PDI--Feb. 14, 2007)

More Classified Ads:

- COMELEC (Resolution No. 7770-A) A6
- COMELEC (Resolution No. 7819) A6
- DOLE-NCR A20

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LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date/Time		Non-Refundable Fee
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
10,110 Bundles Plastic Coin Bag	P407,200.00	February 22, 2007 10.00 AM	March 7, 2007 1:00 PM	P 2,000.00
6,140 Bundles Jacket for Savings Passbook with Logo	969,800.00			
14,200 Bundles Jacket for Savings Signature Card	2,438,400.00			
1,200,000 Pcs ATM Plastic Cards "HICO" (High Coercivity)	P7,200,000.00	February 22, 2007 2:00 PM	March 7, 2007 1:00 PM	P 4,200.00
200,000 Pcs ATM Plastic Cards (Pre-Printed Cards), "HI-CO"	1,200,000.00			
21,630 Bundles Plastic Jacket for ATM Card	P5,405,500.00	February 22, 2007 10:00 AM	March 7, 2007 1:00 PM	P 2,800.00
10,450 Bundles Interbranch Deposit Accomodation Slip	P 416,840 00	February 22, 2007 3.00 PM	March 7 2007 1:00 PM	P 3,000.00
11,700 Bundles Cash Deposit Slip	583,250.00			
7,100 Bundles Withdrawal Slip	247,625.00			
1,210 Pads Application for Manager's Check, Demand Draft, Electronic Money Transfer, Traveller's Check, Gift Check	300,250.00			
6,275 Bundles Check Deposit Slip	941,100.00			
12,600 Bundles Savings Signature Card with Logo	1,886,400.00			
3,650 Bundles BIR Tax Payment Deposit Slip	1,460,400.00			
2,770 Bxs. Continuous Form, 1 Ply, Blue Bar	P2,209,600.00	February 22, 2007 4:00 PM	March 7, 2007 1:00 PM	P 2,000.00
1,120 Bxs. Continuous Form, 2 Ply, Blue Bar	946,050.00			
430 Bxs Continuous Form, 3 Ply, Blue Bar	404,700.00			
660 Bxs Continuous Form with printing	423,150.00			

The Bid Documents shall be available at the Procurement Department (ProcD) starting February 15, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at ProcD Conference Room, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor Dr J. Quintos Sts., Malate, Manila.

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes placed in single outer envelope and sealed accordingly in the bid box located at the abovementioned address.

For more information, please call the ProcD-Requisitions Management Division at telephone no. 551-2200 locals 2452, 2453, 7233 & 7234.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

(PDI-February 14, 2007)

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5285

PNOC
The Energy Company

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND RE-BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

One Unit Kelly Spinner Under FDM 63309
Approved Budget PHP 2,628,700.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Roderick R. Cabantog** starting **February 14, 2007**, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **February 22, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply, Property and Materials Management Division at the above address, and thereafter, dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock Time) of March 8, 2007.** Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

(PDI--Feb. 14, 2007)

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee II

COA6-2007-002

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON AUDIT
Ungka 1, Pavia, Iloilo
Regional Office VI

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Description	Amount
Furnishing of labor & materials (Straight Contract)	Php 9,999,287.00
For the proposed construction of COA Prov. Satellite Auditing Office in Bacolod City	
Target date of accomplishment – 180 calendar days	

The COMMISSION ON AUDIT, through the *CFAG Fund 2006* intends to apply the sum of *Nine Million Nine Hundred Ninety Nine Thousand Two Hundred Eighty Seven Pesos* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *CR No. 2007-002 Construction of COA Provincial Satellite Auditing Office*. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The COMMISSION ON AUDIT now calls for the submission of *Letters of Intent* (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for Furnishing of labor & materials (Straight Contract) for the construction of COA Provincial Satellite Auditing Office, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested bidders must submit their LOIs on February 22, 2007, to February 28, 2007 at *Commission on Audit Regional Office VI, Ungka I, Pavia, Iloilo* and secure the Eligibility Documents there from. Applicants for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: *March 08, 2007 at 2:00 PM)* at *Commission on Audit Regional Office VI, Ungka I, Pavia, Iloilo*. Only those bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at *Commission on Audit Regional Office VI, Ungka 1, Pavia, Iloilo* on or before *March 8, 2007 at 2:00 PM*

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00)*. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before March 7, 2007.

The *Commission on Audit* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible bidders on March 12, 2007 at 2:00 PM at the following address: *Commission on Audit Regional Office VI, Ungka 1, Pavia, Iloilo.*

Eligible bidders must submit their bids at the address below on or before March 23, 2007 at 1:00 PM. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of cash, check or manager's check and in an amount of 1% of the ABC Ninety Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety Two Pesos and Eighty Seven Centavos (P 99,992.87) or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on March 23, 2007 at 2:00 PM, Room 2, COA Regional Office, Ungka 1, Pavia, Iloilo. Bids shall be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who chose to attend at the address given.

Completion of the Works is required at One Hundred Eighty Calendar Days (180).

The *Commission on Audit* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Commission on Audit
Ungka I, Pavia, Iloilo 5001
Tel. No.: (033) 329-2353
Fax No.: (033) 329-7140
Website address: www.coa.gov.ph

(Sgd.) MA. JOSEFINA V. RIVAS
BAC Chairperson

(PDI--Feb. 14 & 21, 2007)

COA6-2007-001

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON AUDIT
Regional Office VI
Ungka I, Pavia, Iloilo

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Description	Amount
Furnishing of labor and materials (Straight Contract) for the proposed construction of COA Region VI Dormitory Building Target Date of Accomplishment: 210 calendar days	P 24,482,649.00

The COMMISSION ON AUDIT, through the *CFAG Fund* intends to apply the sum of *Twenty Four Million Four Hundred Eighty Two Thousand Six Hundred Forty Nine Pesos (P24,482,649.00)* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *Construction of COA Region VI Dormitory Building*. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The COMMISSION ON AUDIT now calls for the submission of *Letters of Intent* (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for *furnishing of labor and materials*. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested bidders must submit their LOIs on or before *February 22-28, 2007, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM* at *Commission on Audit Regional Office VI, Ungka I, Pavia, Iloilo* and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Applicants for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on the date of the opening of Eligibility Documents: *March 8, 2007, 9:00 AM* at *Commission on Audit Regional Office VI, Ungka I, Pavia, Iloilo*. Only those bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification

Interested Bidders shall submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents to the BAC Secretariat at *Commission on Audit Regional Office VI, Ungka I, Pavia, Iloilo* on or before March 8, 2007.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00)*. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before *February 22, 2007, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM*.

The *Commission on Audit* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible bidders on *March 12, 2007, 9:00 AM* at the following address: *Commission on Audit Regional Office VI, Ungka I, Pavia, Iloilo.*

Eligible bidders must submit their bids at the address below on or before *March 23, 2007, 9:00 AM.* All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash, Cashier's or Certified Check in the amount of *Two Hundred Forty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Six and 49/100 (P244,826.49)* or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on *March 23, 2007, 9:00 AM.* Bids shall be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who chose to attend at the address below on *March 23, 2007, 9:00 AM.*

Completion of the Works is required by *210 calendar days*

The *Commission on Audit* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

Commission on Audit
Ungka I, Pavia, Iloilo 5001
Tel. No.: (033) 329-2353
Fax No.: (033) 329-7140
Website address: www.coa.gov.ph

(Sgd.) MA. JOSEFINA V. RIVAS
BAC Chairperson

(PDI–February 14 & 21, 2007)

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF CANCELLATION

Notice is hereby given that the awards of the following beneficiaries of the Libis Espina Project are hereby **CANCELLED** for failure to comply with the terms and conditions of their respective lot awards within the prescribed grace period.

	NAME	PHASE	BLOCK	LOT
1.	ENRIQUEZ, GENEROSO N.	I-B	03	04
2.	ROXAS, OFELIA G.	I-B	09	05
3.	NATIVIDAD, RUBEN S.	I-B	28	01
4.	BUSTAMANTE, HONORIO L.	II	06	01
5.	VELASQUEZ SR., ENRILITO L.	II	18	06
	VELASQUEZ, EDWIN L.	(co-owner)		
6.	RODRIGUEZ, RAYMUNDO D.	II	20	08
7.	CORONEL, CESAR C.	II	29	04

(Sgd.) **FEDERICO A. LAXA**
General Manager

(PDI - Feb. 14, 2007)

ERRATUM

In the **INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AD OF PHILHEALTH-Regional Office XI** published last **February 5 & 12, 2007**, the Pre-Bid Conference date should be on **February 21, 2007** and not as published.

Our apologies.

BUY * SELL * PAWN
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Notice is hereby given that the Estate of deceased Lumen Melad was Extra judicially settled by her sole heir Evangelina G. Dela Cruz per Doc. No. 29 Page No. 07, Book No. 35, Series of 2007 of N. P. Carlos D. Maninang, Guagua Pampanga

(PDI - Feb. 7, 14 & 21, 2007)

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Dr. Jesus Zaballa Galsim

a loving & thoughtful spouse, father & grandfather, a jolly & helpful friend has joined our Creator on February 8, 2007 at the age of 79.

His bereaved wife *Aurora,* children *Rey & Adel, Donna & Ernie, Rency & Elvie, Rainer & Jing, Madeleine, Bel & Pros, Derick & Majo, grandchildren, relatives & friends* request the pious readers to pray that he be immediately received in the company of the happily departed and in the eternal bliss of God's bosom.

His remains lie in state at the Arlington East, C. Raymundo, Pasig. Interment will be on February 16, 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina, after the 1:00 p.m. funeral mass in Nativity of Our Lady Parish Church, Maj. Dizon St., Industrial Valley, Marikina City.

The Missionary Sisters
Servants of the Holy Spirit

Announce the death of

SISTER PRAECLARA, S.S.p.S.
(TRINITAS B. LAZARO)

on February 13, 2007 at the age of 90
at the Convent of the Holy Spirit, Quezon City

Mass of the Resurrection will be offered on
Friday, February 16, 2007 at 3:00 p.m.
at the Convent of the Holy Spirit,
8 Poinsettia Road, Quezon City.

Interment will follow at the Christ the King Cemetery
E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City.

Dr. DOMINGO T. ANTONIO, JR.

Passed on to meet his Creator, and to be reunited with his beloved Ludinila, on 13 February 2007 at the age of 96.

He is deeply mourned by his children **Regina** and **Gary Freed**, **Cristina**, **Celia** and **Jose Roberto Dueñas**, **Fernando**, and **Rebecca** and **Joseph Cotaoco**; by his grandchildren **Christopher** and **Victoria**, **Margarita**, **Carissa** and **Jose Roberto II**, and **Dominic**, **Natalia** and **Carmel**; by his sister **Marita Uylangco**, and by loving nephews and nieces.

He will lie in state at the Capilla del Señor, Santuario de San Antonio at Forbes Park, Makati. Interment plans will be announced later.

CLASSIFIEDS

QUEZON I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Poctol, Pitogo, Quezon

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFICATION AND TO BID

QUEZELCO I is inviting interested suppliers to apply for accreditation and to bid for the supply of hereunder materials:

1.	**KWHM Bottom Connected** 10 (60) A, 240V, 60HZ, Electronic	5,800 pcs.
2.	**Socket Connected, Electronic** C1 100, 240V, 60HZ, 2 wire, 15 TA	200 pcs.
3.	**Meter Base C1 100, 1" HUB**	200 pcs.
4.	**Padlock Seal**	6,000 pcs.

Prospective bidders have to submit their updated company profile addressed to **Mr. Hermes Z. Avillo** BAC Chairman, QUEZELCO I, Brgy. Poctol, Pitogo, Quezon, Financial Standing of the suppliers will be evaluated as to the capability to accomplish the said undertaking.

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders at the BAC secretariat.

The pre-qualification and bidding requirements and activities are as follows:

	Activities	Schedule
1	Accreditation/Pre-qualification of suppliers	February 15-20
2	Issuance of Bid documents	February 15-20
3	Pre-bid conference	February 21 01:00 PM
4	Opening and Evaluation of Bid	February 23 10:00 AM
5	Notice of Award	February 26
6	Bid Document	P5,000 Non-Refundable
7	Terms of payment of Bid Proposals	30 days / 6 months / 1 year

QUEZELCO I reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding at any time prior to award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidders.

For more information, please contact BAC secretariat at **Tel. No. (042) 318-8156**.

(Sgd.) **HERMES Z. AVILLO**
BAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) **DELIA V. VILLELA**
Officer-In-Charge

(PDI–February 14, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project/Brief Description	One (1) lot – supply, install and make operational six (6) units Passenger/Service/Freight elevators at the 5-storey and Multi-Storey Buildings as per BSP scope of works and specifications
Approved Budget for the Contract	Equipment Cost - US$263,800.00 Installation Cost - P5,322,000.00
Delivery Period	Per BSP Terms of Reference

Prospective bidders should have undertaken similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	14-27 February 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	02 March 2007 10:00 a.m.
3. Opening of Bids	20 March 2007 2:00 p.m.
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P9,800.00 to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI--Feb. 14, 2007)

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NOTICE

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS AND CREDITORS OF PALAWAN WOOD ENTERPRISES, INC.:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT PALAWAN WOOD ENTERPRISES, INC., was dissolved by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on 11 August 2003 per certification issued on 21 March 2005. Said corporation will wind up its business or corporate affairs on 14 March 2007 at its office located at Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Any claims against its corporate asset/s listed hereunder shall be filed at its corporate office at Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City on or before 23 March 2007, ten (10) days after the last publication of this notice.

If there is no claim filed after the lapse of said period that would constitute waiver on the part of the claimant or creditor against the asset/s of the corporation.

(Sgd.) **ELENA T. PEREZ**
Acting Corporate Secretary

Asset:
1. real property covered by TCT - 6383

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Nothing follows

(PDI--Feb. 14, 21 & 28, 2007)

NOTICE

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS AND CREDITORS OF APOLLO MINERAL RESOURCES, INC. (formerly APOLLO OIL EXPLORATION & MINERAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION):

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT APOLLO MINERAL RESOURCES, INC., (formerly **APOLLO OIL EXPLORATION & MINERAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**), was dissolved by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on 11 August 2003 per certification issued on 21 March 2005. Said corporation will wind up its business or corporate affairs on 14 March 2007 at its office located at Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Any claims against its corporate assets shall be filed at its corporate office at Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City on or before 23 March 2007, ten (10) days after the last publication of this notice.

If there is no claim filed after the lapse of said period that would constitute waiver on the part of the claimant or creditor against the asset/s of the corporation.

(Sgd.) **ELENA T. PEREZ**
Acting Corporate Secretary

(PDI--Feb. 14, 21 & 28, 2007)

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JOSEPHINE A. ARELLANO

Wife of the late
Lt. General Alfonso V. Arellano.

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on February 12, 2007 at the age of 93.

Her loving children **Bobby** (†) and **Leidy**, **Amor** (†) and **Douglas Mondoñedo**, **Fe** and **Charlie Alejandre**, **Nina** (†), **Peach** and **Art** (†) **Marcelo**, **Tong** (†) and **MaryAnn**, **Toch** and **Nini**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the family residence at #16 Julian Felipe Street, NSHA, Phase V, BF Homes, Las Piñas.

Cremation and interment will be announced later. Contact No. 770-8059.

SK LEONCIO (LUCING) T. REYES

Past Grand Knight, K of C, Council 4267
Pasay City

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 13, 2007 at the age of 91.

He is survived by his wife LUZ; children and children-in-law CHITO & SALLY, NORA & RUDY, OBET & CORA, LARRY & MERCI, CHING, LUVIN & JONA; grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, EDSA, Makati City.

Interment at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque on Sunday, February 18, 2007.

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FOR MORE INFO: Mr. Dale Thompson, our president and a Certified Canadian Immigration Consultant, will conduct two informal briefings at Suite 1206, 12th Floor, MCS Tower, Makati Cinema Square, Don Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City on **Saturday, February 17 at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Fee: Php 300.**

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Look for Ms. Thammy (108) or Ms. Kaye (109)

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T-bond rate drops to 5.98%

Banks scramble for dwindling supply of gov't securities

By Michelle V. Remo

THE RATE FOR THE 7-YEAR TREASURY bonds yesterday dropped by 12.7 basis points to 5.981 percent, as highly liquid banks scrambled for the dwindling supply of long-term government securities.

In a press briefing after yesterday's fortnightly auction for T-bonds, National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the decline of the 7-year bond rate was a consequence of a high demand for debt instruments and confidence in the government's long-term fiscal position.

"The market is very positive and optimistic on account of recent developments in the macroeconomic front," Cruz told reporters.

The expected slowdown in inflation also created a downward pressure on interest rate on government securities, he added.

Inflation decelerated further to 3.9 percent in January from a year ago, the slowest since November 2003.

The last time the 7-year bonds were offered by the government was on Dec. 14, when the securities fetched an average rate of 6.108 percent.

The market manifested strong appetite for the bonds, raising P25.24 billion worth of bids. The amount of tenders was much higher than the government's debt offering of only P7 billion.

Despite the over-subscription of the government securities, the Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee did not borrow more than its original debt offering, and accepted only P7 billion worth of bids.

The drop in the rate for the 7-year bonds followed the decline of Treasury bill rates to new all-time lows last week.

The 91-day T-bill rate, used as a benchmark in pricing bank loans, fell by 16.3 basis points to 3.008 percent from the 3.171 percent recorded in the previous auction two weeks ago.

Cruz said the optimism on the government's fiscal standing was anchored on the declining budget deficit, which last year settled at only P62.2 billion. This was much lower than the P125-billion ceiling set for 2006 and the P146.8 billion recorded for 2005. The government seeks to trim the budget deficit to P63 billion this year.

Fiscal authorities are confident that the target will be achieved following the expected sale of various state-owned assets this year.

The government hopes P25 billion, from the sale of its 46-percent stake in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. (PTIC).

Other big-ticket assets to be privatized this year are the Al-Amanah Islamic Investment Bank and the old Ilo-ilo airport property.

In Subic, a science facility to train athletes

By Dennis U. Eroa

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE—SUBIC BAY Sports Management Inc. (SBSMI) and a group of foreign investors from Korea, Hong Kong and the United States have finalized plans to establish the High Performance Athletes Institute at the Remy Field Sports Complex here.

The Institute will include a modern sports hotel, sports dormitory and training facilities, including science laboratories and a fitness center.

SBSMI president Virgilio Sison, a former Davis Cup and ATP tennis tour player during the early 80s, said the group was ready to spend $1 million for the first phase of the project, which was designed to boost the sports and tourism programs of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority under Chief Executive Officer and administrator Armand Arreza and chair Feliciano Salonga.

"Due to increasing demands and changing needs of athletes, coaches and fitness buffs, the new facilities will be built to maximize the needed synergy in promoting a wholesome sports training village," Sison said.

"These [facilities] will be for the all ages, including elite athletes and those in the recreational and developmental levels," Sison added.

He added that he had initial talks with Hermenegildo J. Atienza III of the SBMA Business Development.

"If things go as planned, the investors are ready to spend P80,000,000 for Phase II," he said.

The planned sports hotel and dormitories for the first phase will have 60 to 80 rooms located on a 3,000 square-meter area. An indoor training swimming pool will also be built.

Based on statistics from the Department of Tourism, tourist arrivals in Subic in 2004 numbered 133,000, but the Freeport areas only have a combined 1,816 rooms.

"Clearly, more rooms and packaging promotions will be a priority, and this project through sports marketing can help SBMA bring in more investors into the tourism portfolio," said Sison.

Sison, the first Filipino tennis player to see action in the four Grand Slams (French Open, Australian Open, Wimbledon and US Open), said the Institute would also complement the planned medical tourism facility at the nearby Moonbay Marina.

"The new facilities will boost Subic Bay's bid to become the 'Sports Camp Capital' and 'Wellness Center' of the country," Sison said.

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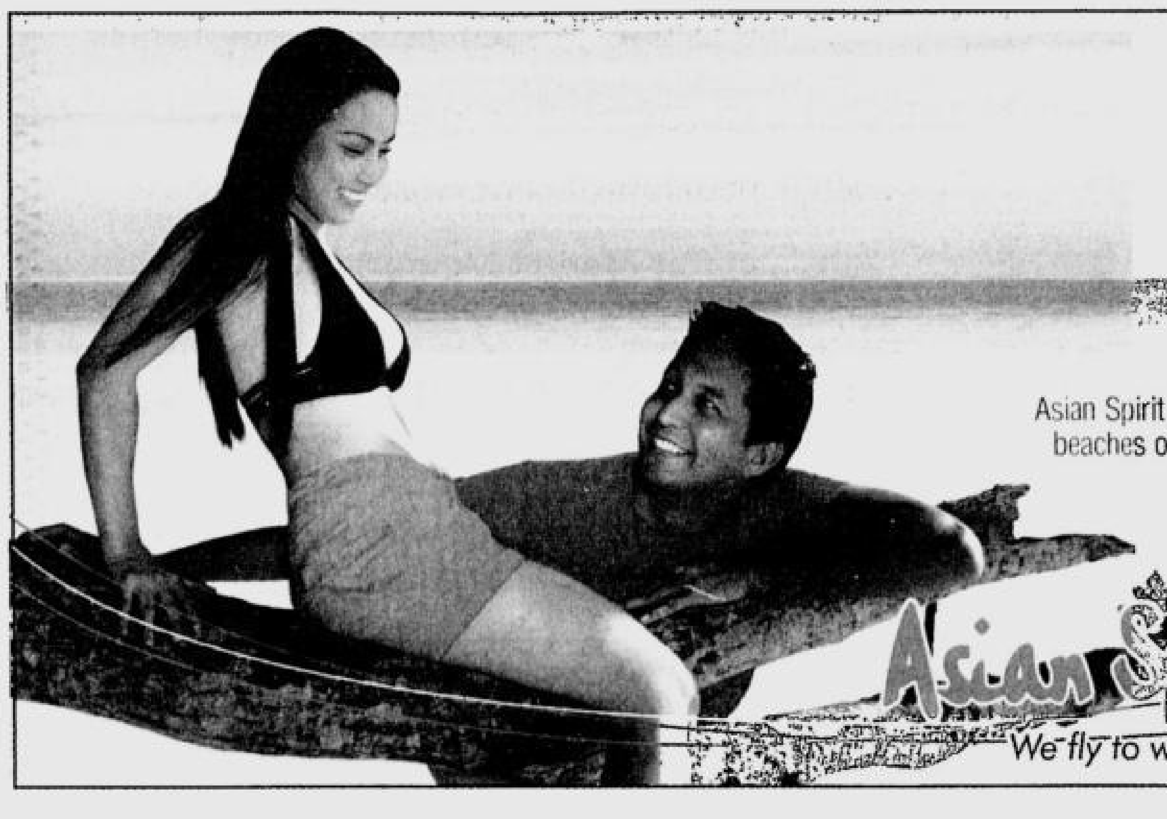
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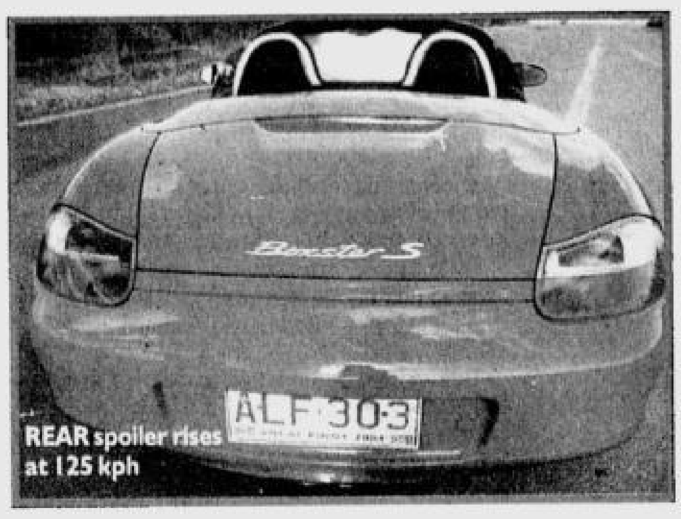
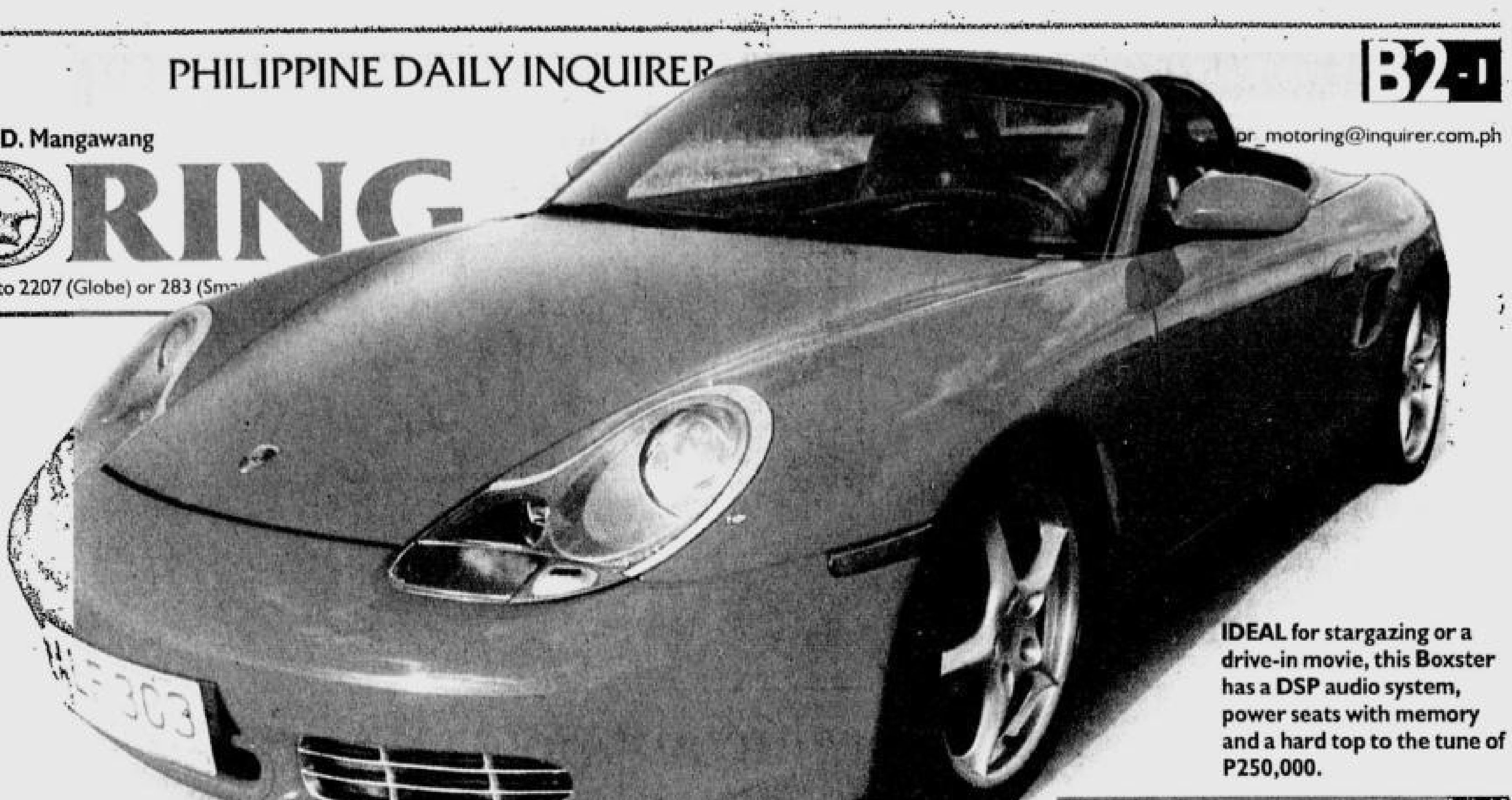
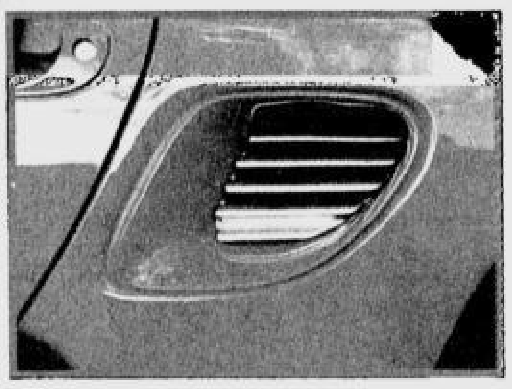


REAR spoiler rises at 125 kph



IDEAL for stargazing or a drive-in movie, this Boxster has a DSP audio system, power seats with memory and a hard top to the tune of P250,000.



SIDE air dams

The hard way to own a Porsche is to buy the 2007 Boxster S at P6.25M. But there's a 2000 model at just P3.2M. Now that makes your heart just skip a beat

Feelin' hip and Porsche all over, at half the price

Text and photos by Tessa R. Salazar

IF YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED to acquire a Porsche, and be among the 65 or so Boxster owners here in the Philippines, you can always go to the PGA showroom on Edsa and have your checkbook ready for a spanking new 2007 Boxster S with a four-year warranty at P6,250,000. But hold that thought.

You can retrace your steps, come in again at the posh showroom, and still have your checkbook ready, but this time for only P3.2 million, and you still get essentially the same car—well, take away the word "new" (it still looks "spanking") and around seven years. And there would still be a two-year warranty which covers all major parts of the vehicle for parts and labor.

Now some may see that as a bargain that may be well worth it. Others, especially those who have the money to buy a brand-new Boxster S five times over, wouldn't even give that a passing thought. Why would they buy a "bargain" sports car when the very essence of buying an expensive car in the Philippines is the invisible sky-high price tag that should always come with it?

'Hand-me-down'

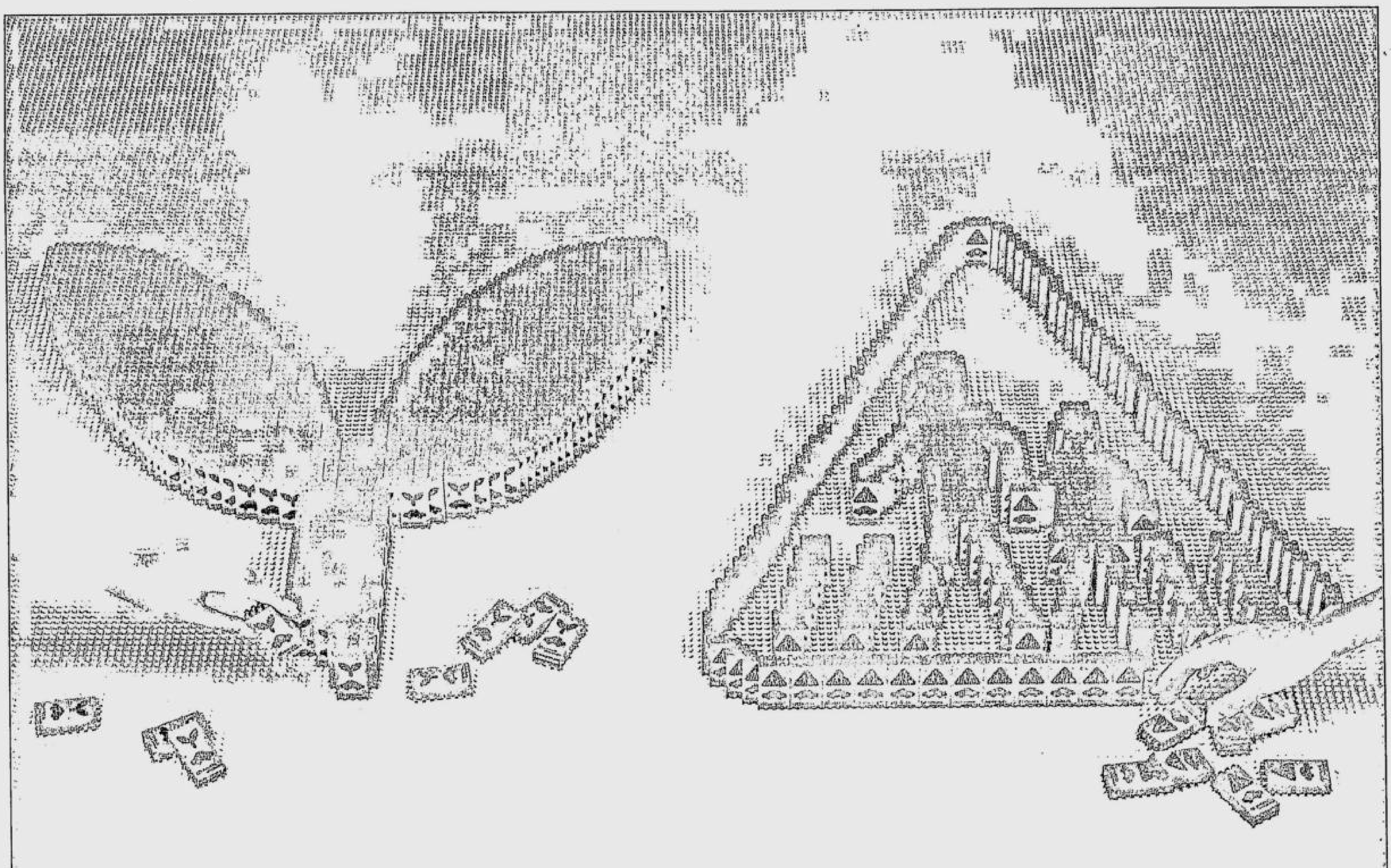
But the people at PGA Cars, however, have perhaps taken notice of the many "entry-level" millionaires expressing their intent to buy an "entry-level" Porsche, even if owning one meant being the recipient of a "hand-me-down." The 3-year-old Porsche approved pre-owned car program in the country being handled by PGA Cars and backed by the principal company of Porsche in Germany is considered an easier way into the elite club of Porsche owners, and an easier way out of the current non-Porsche luxury car you're in, because PGA Cars also accepts trade-ins. Used Porsche cars under 9 years old carry a one-year warranty.

Wouldn't the drive feel of a 7-year, 50,000-km difference between the new and old Boxster S be felt significantly? PGA Car's Spencer Yu has the ready answer for that: the age difference doesn't matter. "Once you have a Porsche, you never cannot have a Porsche—whether it's for the driving pleasure or the *porma.*"

Maintenance checks

Before certifying this particular red Boxster S for the Porsche approved preowned car warranty program, PGA had already conducted complete maintenance checks, and had replaced the shock absorbers, tires and rims, brake pads and had done full interior and ex-

FEELIN'/B2-2



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A reluctant note

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN. Imagine all the fuss, the ensuing alarm, when I looked at the calendar last week and saw that my column would land right smack dab on the 14th of February. Curt and cynical columnists can go all Ebenezer Scrooge during Christmas but woe the hack who omits playing to the crowd during Valentine's and Mother's Day. He who doesn't is most definitely a reptile.

So I take the cue from generations of dumbstruck male writers who have gone to print before me and scrabble about, trying to put to words what their muse means to them.

What twisted sense of adoration drives us to bear heart and soul on circulated newsprint? The answer to that is simple. It is to share some sort of human experience that hopefully uplifts or at the very least gives solace to persons of the same persuasion. As is obvious from the section where this column is printed, one can gather that the writer is in a deep, meaningful, long-term relationship with the automobile.

From the age of 10, when I first got behind the steering wheel for my first driving lesson, the outcome was never in much doubt. Sure, the first few outings were awkward and fumbling, and I'll admit to stalling quite a few times, but the sense of freedom and accomplishment overcame whatever frustration I had with the clutch pedal.

The rest is history as they say but I remember significant moments as if they had just happened yesterday. It is in these ups, downs, lefts, rights and arounds that I remember most of time with cars.

Speed

As juvenile and reckless as this may sound, yes, it is sometimes about the speed. It's all about the g-forces of acceleration, the velocity-induced vertigo and the fear that comes with going too fast.

You keep pushing yourself, within whatever limits seem mortally reasonable and one day you decide enough is enough. I was fortunate to have that realization way, way past 200 kph, charging down some empty and immaculate Andalusian farm to market road in a big engined Bimmer. It was the case of the ideal car, on a great road in perfect conditions—a momentous enough occasion to consider closing a chapter of one's life.

Beauty

It is about beauty too, staring it in the face and touching it. There are cars that move people simply with the way they are shaped and formed. For most, these are the exotic beauties from Europe with lines more aerospace oriented than automobile. Nothing's wrong with falling in love with something that is built to evoke emotion. Pininfarina, Guigaro and Bertone would not have it any other way.

Yet there are just those cars that exude beauty from their simplicity and utility. It is a true joy to see and understand functional design but a greater delight still is to touch, feel and use something that was well thought out and executed. True innovation is in itself sexy and far more satisfying than pure eye candy. Wait until you get to your first Tokyo Motor Show and then you will understand, surrounded by every conceivable concept car and technology demonstrator known to man.

Then there is the wonderful fact that the longer one drives, the better the relationship between car and driver gets. If it takes a lifetime to get to know something, then that something is worth hanging on to. Few things in this age of streaming video and instant messaging still afford such an experience.

Twenty years behind the wheel and I can say that I'm only starting to get better at this driving thing. I still find myself practicing new skills and techniques, just as when I was 10. At the starting gate of my very first autocross, I just can't help but realize that there is so much more to driving than the daily commute.

More than where I've been or what I've done, what really matters is how I got here, now thirtysomething, so very far from the subdivision streets where I started. All this, of course, is due to the adventure my life has been because of the automobile.

Feelin' hip and Porsche all over, at half the price

From page B2-1

terior detailing.

And then PGA Cars entrusted the unit to this writer for a week-long spin. Upon its return, PGA assured that this Boxster S would have to undergo another round of inspection and full detailing. Apologies for the Choc-Nut wrappers, if some are to be found inside the car (Hey, we bet even Porsche owners get that occasional craving for dirty ice cream or fish balls).

The number of cars available in the PGA approved preowned car program varies between eight and 12 at any given time. Porsche models currently available in the preowned program are the whole line of Boxsters, Cayennes, Caymans and 911s. All markets around the world, Yu explains, offer the Porsche approved preowned car program. In 2006, PGA's preowned program sold almost 40 cars.

Driving impressions

When it was driven out of the PGA Cars' driveway onto Edsa, the 2000 Boxster S strained the necks of not a few passers-by. Like Tyra Banks descending upon Nepa Q-Mart, the intoxicatingly athletic-looking Boxster S looked out of place among the smoke-belching buses and jeepneys at the busy intersection of Edsa and Ortigas. And the soft-top was still up, even.

LOOK Ma, no engine and an ample space for the hood.

Inquirer Motoring didn't even get to glimpse its 3.2-liter mid-engine, simply because the front and back compartments didn't house the engine. They were there to store the driver and passenger's stuff, or cash, or stash, or whatever. The engine was, well, somewhere in between, or more precisely, just behind the driver.

Well, we didn't need to see the engine to feel how it performed. Although we felt the body's heaviness in the acceleration from 0 to around 50 kph, once it got past that, the Boxster S revealed its playful nature. The quick twitches, precise handling, and rock-solid balance made the person behind the wheel feel superhuman or supercute (whichever comes first, baby).

The wet-look red body, complemented by the large red brake calipers, caught the eye. The wide body, big wheels and that overall classic sports car appearance made even those not in the know about cars take second glances. Okay, the first glance could have been for the car, the second for the driver (again, whichever comes first, baby).

Fun factor

Driving at speed in a Porsche, however, isn't just for the sake of speed. There's the fun factor as well. At the Subic racetrack with veteran rallye driver Pocholo Ramirez, this driver was encouraged to make some incredible high-speed maneuvers. "Not to worry with the Porsche," Tito Poch would later murmur in between wiping beads of sweat, "the car's terrific road grip gives confidence to the driver and passenger." And we say veteran rallye drivers and Porsche sportscars age gracefully (again, whichever comes first, baby).

The Boxster is so low slung that standing beside it, the driver could see the very top of the car's canvas roof. Surprisingly, the ride height is comfortable even for the average Pinoy female (we were under the impression that a roadster seat would always feel low). So, this meant this driver didn't have to strain her neck out like an ostrich to see what was ahead.

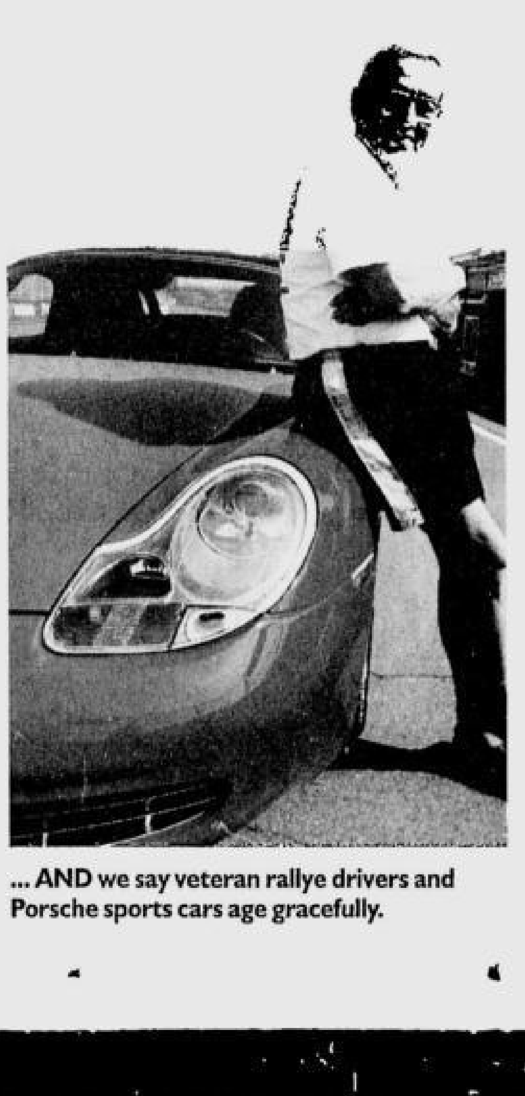
The dashboard controls are within easy reach for relatively shorter arms and smaller hands. The hood and trunk lids are lightweight and provided ample space. Noticeable is the significantly narrower spare tire at the front compartment—just enough to get you to the next tire repair station.

But this Boxster will receive its own share of punches from veteran Porsche owners, particularly on the heaviness of the acceleration. Though it's teeming with all the neat details you expect from a true-blue Porsche, this unit felt a bit heavy, making this driver at times feeling for the handbrake if it was up. On flat-out, pedal-to-the-metal drives, however, the machine rumbles to life, and you know why, depreciated by half and all, it still is worthy of carrying the Porsche insignia.

Just like other roadsters, the seatbelts are placed way behind the seats, making us do an extended twist just to reach them (more senior drivers should stretch their upper torsos before getting in).

We didn't toy with the tiptronic drive. Just putting the thing on "D" squeezed out all the adrenaline we could handle. The wide-body, low-slung stance guaranteed no tipping over even when turning at high speeds, but the trade-off was a jarring ride on bumpy roads and on village bumps.

Speaking of bumps, Inquirer Motoring asked PGA Cars, in passing, if Philippine roads were sports car-friendly or not. It answered that, on the contrary, there were Porsche owners who used the car every day. The Boxster's low front bumper, which looked fragile, is said to withstand a 5-kph collision without sustaining damage. Porsche club members, it said, have regularly been organizing countryside tours, and a Luzon tour is being planned at the end of this month.



... AND we say veteran rallye drivers and Porsche sports cars age gracefully.

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MOTORSCOPE

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START YOUR ENGINES NOW AND PREPARE for the most amazing wheels thrills as Worldbex Services International (WSI) takes you to the most celebrated international automobile experience in the 3rd Manila International Autoshow, slated on March 29-April 1 at the World Trade Center, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

Showcasing the latest fad in the world of automotive madness in more than 14,000 square meters of space solely for motor delights, the 3rd Manila International Autoshow vows to once again put into the spotlight its one-of-a-kind plethora of automotive brilliance in the country.

Thousands of spectators and car aficionados are expected to grace this year's biggest car trade event as WSI promises to be bigger and better this 2007, after more than 75,600 visitors reveled on last year's success. Highlights of the event will also include various fun activities, special promotions and remarkable exhibits for the entire family.

The big event will also feature a far-reaching 5,000 square meters of exhibition hall showing off aftermarket parts and accessories attuned to the popularity of customized rides, motorcycle and truck displays.

The 3rd Manila International Autoshow will also be the most rewarding event to date as the Car Awards Group (Cagi), the only scientific and unbiased award-giving body composed of over 40 media personalities from 25 various media outfits, spearheads the unveiling of the 2007 Car of the Year.

Executive Road Cycling Series sponsor

MOTOR IMAGE PILIPINAS INC. (MIPI), THE official distributor of the Subaru models in the Philippines, announces its sponsorship of the first-ever Spyder Executive Road Cycling Race (XRC) Series on Feb. 17 and 18 at the Subic Freeport Zone. Motor Image's best-selling SUV model, the Subaru Forester 2.5XT Turbo will be the official tour vehicle of the event. The XRC Series will be participated in by the country's top corporate executives and businessmen who have elevated their enthusiasm for cycling into an organized quarterly racing event.

"Motor Image believes that the XRC event and its riders best represent the passion that Subaru vehicles bring to their owners and thus, only fitting, that the Forester 2.5XT Turbo SUV leads the cyclists' to their route as the official tour vehicle," says Nicky Mariano, the general manager of Motor Image Pilipinas.

Motor Image will also be present during the XRC events to give the participants as well as their families and supporters the opportunity to experience Subaru with their test-drive vehicles. They can experience for themselves the performance that has pushed Subaru to numerous victories in the World Rally Championship. Also on display will be various Subaru vehicles outfitted with accessories that will complement the outdoor lifestyle of individuals who share Subaru's same passion for life.

Octane rating: the power of premium gasoline

WHEN IT COMES TO FUEL SELECTION, WE motorists tend to lean toward fuels with lower prices. What we don't realize is, if our aim is to save on fuel consumption and, in effect, on the amount we spend every time we gas up our cars, we should consider more than just cost per liter. If we really want to get the most out of our cars and the fuel we put in them, the actual numbers we should focus on are the octane ratings.

You'll notice the bold yellow stickers beside the gasoline nozzles at the station with a number stating the octane rating of that particular fuel. It's important to know the octane rating that best suits your type of vehicle—and gas up with the fuel that complements it. Using fuel that doesn't match your car's requirement could result in engine knocking, power loss and eventual engine damage.

Petron offers three premium fuels with different octane ratings to suit your car's needs. With a rating of 93, Xtra Unleaded provides you with power delivery for more mileage as proven in the Petron Xtra Mile Challenge. XCS Plus, at an octane rating of 95, brings unrestrained power with controlled fuel consumption. And for a power surge that lasts, there's Petron Blaze with an octane rating of 96+.

When choosing the right fuel for your car, don't let costs fool you. Go for the widest range of premium gasoline, available at Petron.

Latest in radiator repair technology

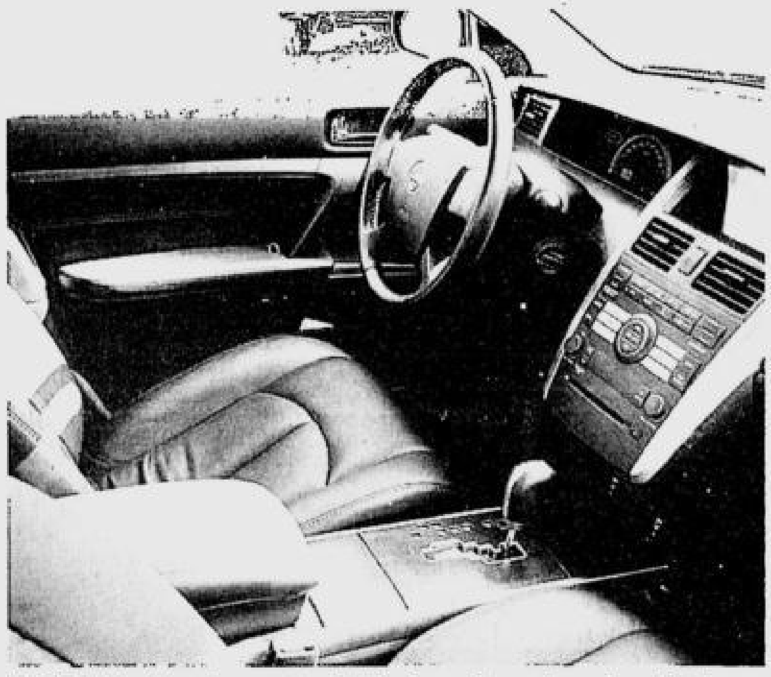
JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOUR CRACKED or leaking radiators are best left at the "casa" or at the garbage bin for a replacement, Cord Chemicals provides a better solution for drivers, travelers and vehicle owners.

Gladiator is a high-performance external sealant specially formulated for cracked and leaking radiators. It cures fast in just 30 minutes, thus reducing downtime and increasing output. Since it is hand moldable, it's a user-friendly product. Remarkably, Gladiator can withstand high temperature and high pressure up to 72 pounds per square inch (psi).

Gladiator is in fact the first of its kind in the country. Since the product was launched and advertised in April 2006, several consumers and car owners have found the product reliable and effective, especially when their repaired radiators passed the leak and pressure test conducted by a well-known car brand. They also found the product cost-efficient and money-saving since welding or radiator conversion costs P1,000 to P3,000 while a brand-new plastic radiator costs P20,000 to P40,000.

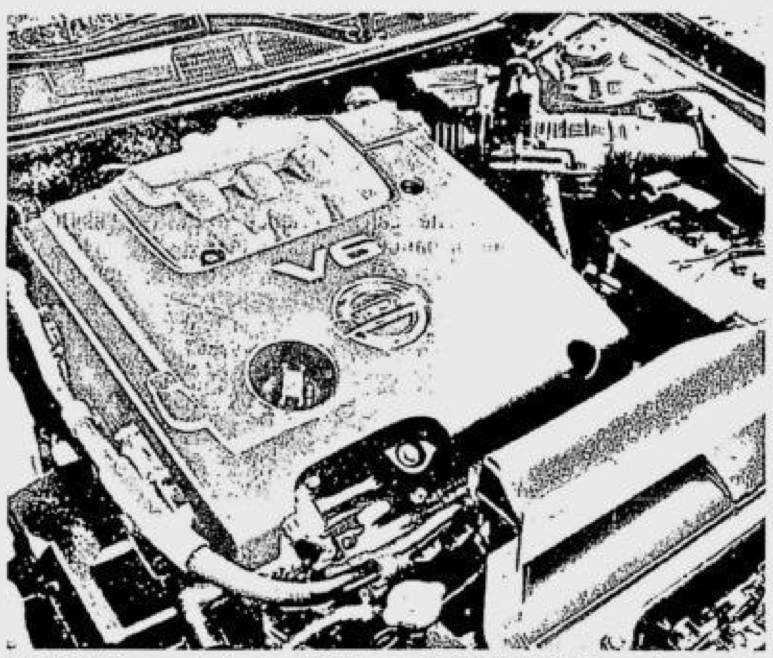
Gladiator is available at any outlet of Ace Hardware, Handyman Do It Center, SM Hardware Workshop, Ace Builders Center, True Value Hardware Store, The DIY Shop and leading hardware and auto supply stores nationwide.

ELEGANT in the relative simplicity of its design



INSIDE, black leather, matte-finished wood panels, and metal trim

PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA MENDOZA



NISSAN'S award-winning V6 24 valve DOHC VQ23DE engine powers the Teana.

Waiting for the Teana

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER name would smell just as sweet, Shakespeare once wrote. So whether the Nissan Teana is sold as the Cefiro in Singapore and Hong Kong, as the Teana in Thailand or as the Maxima in Australia and North America, the nomenclature doesn't matter. What really matters is whether Nissan Motor Co. has come up with a car that will compete capably with other brands in its market segment.

First unveiled in Japan in February 2003, the Teana, with slight external modifications, was introduced later in the same year as the Maxima in North America and Australia. The Teana has the same platform, engine, drivetrain, suspension system and size as the Maxima, which, however, has a longer sunroof and several external differences.

The Teana arrives rather late in the Philippines, having been introduced in Thailand as early as 2004. Raymond Tribdino, Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. (NMPI) senior manager for market and product planning, told me in an e-mail in January 2006 that NMPI had intended to formally launch the Teana here in 2005 to replace the aging Cefiro, but global demand forced them to defer it. Now the launching is scheduled in the latter part of February 2007.

Long wait

Was the long wait worth it? Imported as a CBU (completely built unit) from Nissan's high-tech assembly plant in Kyushu, Japan, Nissan's latest flagship model shares the same platform with the Infiniti M45 and enters the executive car market as an attractively priced competitor. With a P1,880,000 price tag, the high-end Teana 230JM costs P110,000 less than the 2007 Toyota Camry 3.5Q. The base model, the 230JK, sells for P1,680,000.

Viewed from any angle, the Teana evokes elegance and power in the relative simplicity of its design. The exterior combines the lateral windows design of the Infiniti M45 with a wide front grille, side panel with cuffed wheel arches, triangular tail lights and a boxy rear end showing cues from Chris Bangle's BMW 7.

Whether you get the 230JM or the 230JK, the Teana is equipped with a 2.3-liter V6, 24-valve, twin-cam engine packing 173 PS/6,000 rpm and max torque of 22.9 kg-m/4,400 rpm. This VQ23DE powerplant comes from Nissan's VQ engine series that made Ward's 10 Best Engines list 12 years in a row. In my many, many years of test-driving cars of various makes and models, I have found the VQ engine to be one of the quietest engines in the industry—if not the quietest.

Performance

While the Teana does not have the quick 0-to-60 acceleration of a sport sedan, it performs smoothly in all driving situations, whether in stop-and-go city traffic or at speeds exceeding 100 kph on the open highway. This efficient, quiet engine performance, together with the spaciousness of the passenger cabin afforded by the Teana's size, plus the independent suspension front and rear with stabilizer bars, results in exceptional ride quality for all occupants.

The 4-speed E-CAT (electronically controlled automatic transmission), 5.3-meters minimum-turning radius and rear-view reversing camera that displays on the dashboard monitor, make this executive sedan easy to drive and park. Inside, the genuine leather upholstery and trim, memory adjustment for the driver's seat, matte-finished wood panels on the dash and jagged-design gearbox, Human Machine interface with 7-inch color display, power sunroof, dual climate control air con, six-disc CD changer and audio system with six speakers and remotely controlled rear power sunshade contribute to the luxury class ambience and raise the riding comfort level. The center console with dials resembles the one in the stylish Murano.

Intelligence key

To make things even easier for the driver, the Teana offers keyless "smart start and entry" whereby you can unlock the car and start the engine simply by pushing buttons as long as you have the Nissan Intelligence Card Key in your pocket. The Teana is stacked with safety features: six airbags, dual front active headrests, disc brakes on all four 16-inch alloy wheels, ABS with EBD and Brake Assist, Vehicle Dynamic Control, Xenon headlamps with automatic level adjuster and fixed-type Adaptive Front-lighting System, turn signal indicators on the side mirrors, front fog lamps, LED stop lamps, dual front pretensioner seatbelts and three rear 3-point seatbelts.

Bottom line, the Teana with its advanced technology and high level of equipment is poised to grab market share from best-sellers in the executive car segment. It was well worth waiting for.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: A cubicle is just a padded cell without a door.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

Toyota extends Triple Crown promo to Feb. 28

TOYOTA MOTOR PHILIPPINES CORP. extends its January Triple Crown promo until Feb. 28. Prizes are doubled from 15 to 30 raffle prizes composed of 10 Sony Play Station 3 units, 10 Panasonic 32" LCD Televisions and 10 Vios 1.3E compact sedans. Promo period has been extended from Jan. 31 to Feb. 28, with grand draw to be held on March 9.

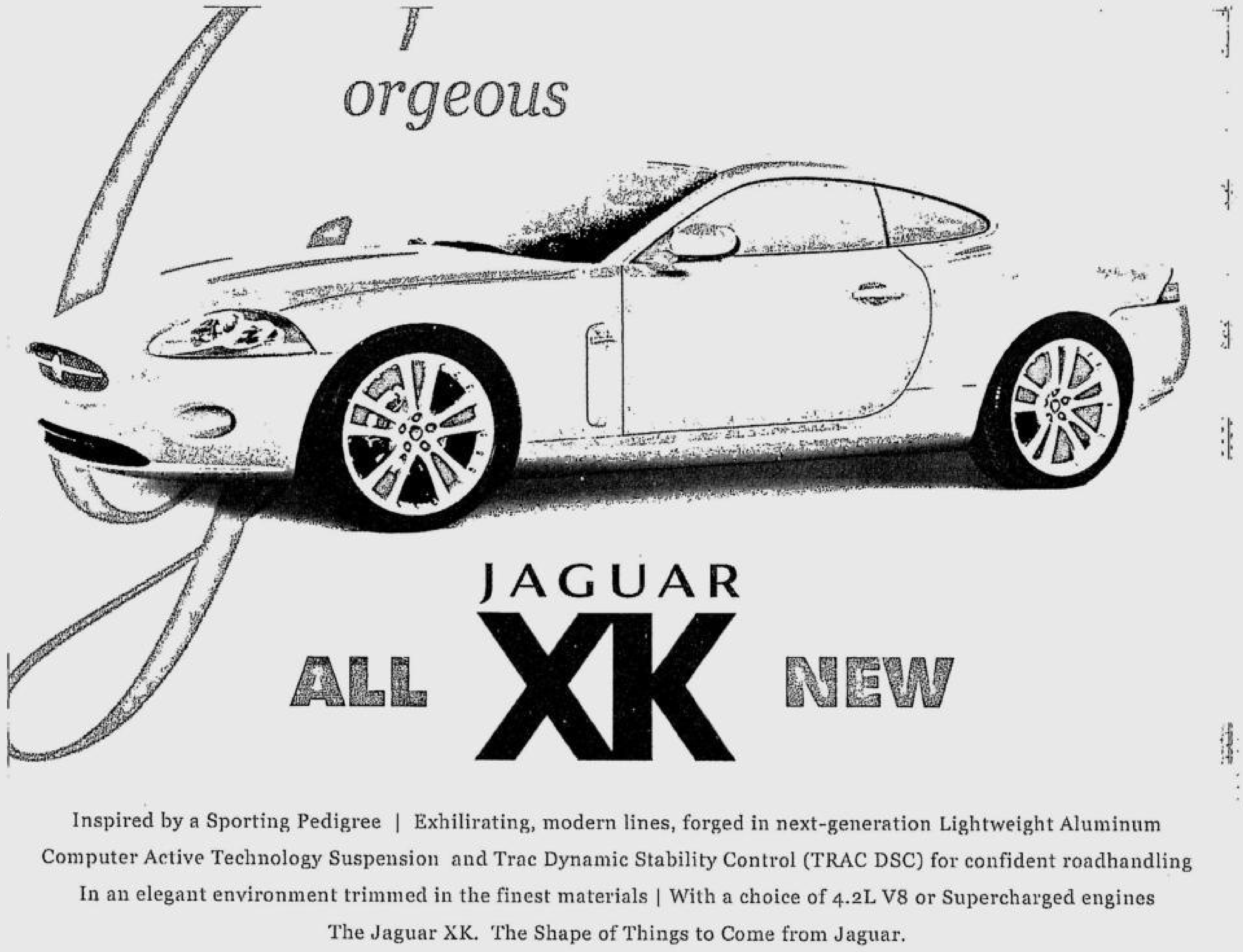
Aside from the raffle, customers select variants will automatically receive a Toyota Savings plus worth P30,000 for the Innova, P40,000 for the Altis, and P15,000 for select Vios variants. The Toyota Savings Plus can be used for accessories, chattel mortgage, LTO registration, or Toyota Financial Services (TFS) financing package.

Low down payments

Customers can also enjoy down payments for as low as 10 percent for select Innova, Altis and Vios variants, and monthly amortization for as low as P5,715.

For instance, the Innova 2.0 J Manual Transmission, with P763,000 retail price, can be purchased at 50 percent down payment, or P381,000, and monthly amortization of P7,429 for 72 months. The Vios 1.3 J manual transmission, with retail price of P553,000, is available at 50 percent down payment equivalent to P276,500 and monthly amortization of P5,715 up to 72 months.

Visit your nearest Toyota dealer to avail of this special offer.



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More than lowering toll fees

By Charles E. Buban

FOR THOSE WHO haven't noticed it yet, driving through the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) costs much less these days after its operator, the Manila North Tollways Corp., decided to reduce the toll rates by as much as 10 percent.

Marlene Ochoa, MNTC vice president for corporate communications, explained the adjustments were based on the company's toll-fee formula, as well as the peso-dollar exchange rate movements and the consumer price index.

"The reduction of the toll rates was possible because of the peso's strong performance in the foreign exchange market (despite the loans of the MNTC are dollar-based) and the steady inflation rate," she said.

First 14 km

For the first 14 kilometers up to Bocaue in Bulacan, motorists are now paying a flat rate of P38 (from P42) for Class 1 or light vehicles, P94 (from P105) for Class 2 vehicles or buses, and P113 (from P126) for Class 3 or heavy vehicles or trucks.

After Bocaue, an increment of P2.20 (from P2.49), P5.49 (P6.23), and P6.59 (from P7.47) per kilometer is charged for classes 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

MNTC believes that with the reduced toll fees, people would have more reason to travel to the North, especially this approaching holiday (the Holy Week) as well as summer.

Much lower cost

Furthermore, trucks and trailers that used to pay P609 from the Balintawak toll plaza in Quezon City to Sta. Ines in Mabalacat, Pampanga will now have to pay only P539, or P70 less making the cost of transporting goods from the North, and vice versa much lower.

It was in February 2006 when MNTC took over the operation of the 83.7-km expressway from the government.

With $371-million (around P18 billion) budget, MNTC expanded and modernized the NLEX under a special toll operating agreement (Stoa) with the Philippine National Construction Corp.

More new lane km

With the agreement, MNTC has constructed additional 138 new lane kilometers that now serves 1,000 vehicles per lane per hour on both directions (this eased the traffic considering the NLEX services up to 2,200 vehicles per lane per hour on both directions before this).

Ochoa added that MNTC has also resurfaced 100 percent of all the roads, added four new interchanges in Marilao, Mexico, Angeles and Dau while upgrading the existing 10, constructed a new flyover in Novaliches, widened 26 exits, as well as built four new toll plazas in Balintawak, Bocaue, Tabang and Dau while expanded existing ones.

MNTC is owned by four shareholders: the First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp., the infrastructure arm of the Lopez Group; Egis Projects S.A. of France, reputedly the world's biggest tollways operator; Leighton Asia Ltd. of Australia, a civil works specialist with an extensive track record in toll road construction; and the PNCC, the government-owned company that holds the franchise for the operation of the expressway.

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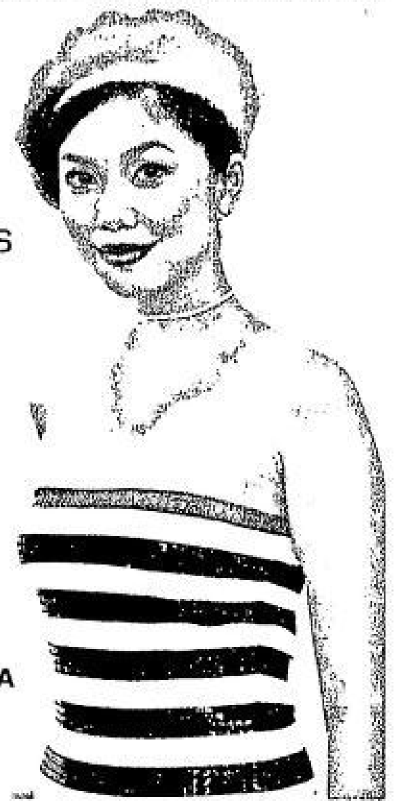
2BU! SURVEY

What celebs did for love

People in show biz do crazy things for love. As if we didn't know . . .

Text by Niño Mark M. Sablan,
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Konrad Ong



BIANCA Valerio

LOVE MAKES US DO A LOT OF things: mistakes, stupid stuff, grand gestures, sacrifices. It's definitely no different with the stars. Even celebrities will do anything and everything for love.

"My ex-girlfriend made me read a book ("Deception Point" by Dan Brown) *pagkatapos pinakuwento niya sa 'kin lahat* after reading. Whew! *Para hindi na daw niya basahin.* I also cooked for my ex-girlfriend's mom and *lola para lang makapasok sa bahay nila.*" **–Chuck Allie**

AIZA Marquez

"My boyfriend's manager didn't really know we were on. So when we were in his cousin's house, and the manager was suddenly at the door of the house, I hid inside the closet. Sacrifice for love, I guess." **–Aiza Marquez**

"The most memorable thing I ever did for love was to cut my hair like Mo in 'Three Stooges' and put on a Prince Valiant costume complete with tights. It's so memorable it haunts me in my dreams." **–JM Rodriguez**

"I once had a cinema and a small bar closed for an evening for his birthday and I invited close friends and family for a surprise private movie premiere and party. But the biggest surprise was finding a most recent picture of his daughter he hadn't seen in five years. I had it enlarged and framed for posterity." **–Bianca Valerio**

"*Dinala ko po 'yung* date *ko sa* beach *pagkatapos pinagluto ko siya. Ang saya!*" **–Gian Carlos**

LUKE Jickain

"Most memorable? I moved all the way to the Philippines from California to give it another chance. We ended up breaking up, but I stayed here because I fell in love with the country." **–Will Devaughn**

"I endured a long-distance relationship for over a year with a guy I'd known for about a month. It didn't work out but it's definitely memorable." **–Sam Oh**

"When I was in high school, I used to date this girl whose parents were so strict. We found a way to see each other. So one night I sneaked inside their house and when I was about to get caught, I hid inside her closet. After her parents went down, she opened the closet and saw me looking sweaty. Then she sat down beside me till late night. Being stuck for a while in a closet can be memorable." **–Luke Jickain**

"The most memorable thing I did for love: buy leather shoes for her dad's approval." **–Marc Abaya**

PAOLO Paraiso

"I gave it all for her." **–Marco Alcaraz**

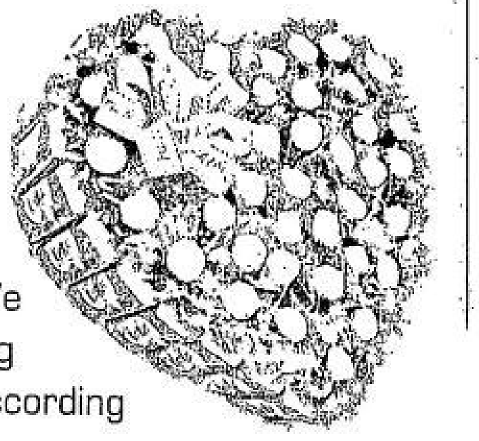
"I defied reason and threw the rule book away. All for first love, beybeh. Hehe." **–Nikki Gil**

"I gave the relationship up because I knew she deserved better." **–Derek Ramsay**

"Most memorable thing I did for love is leave." **–Paolo Paraiso**

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu-@yahoo.com

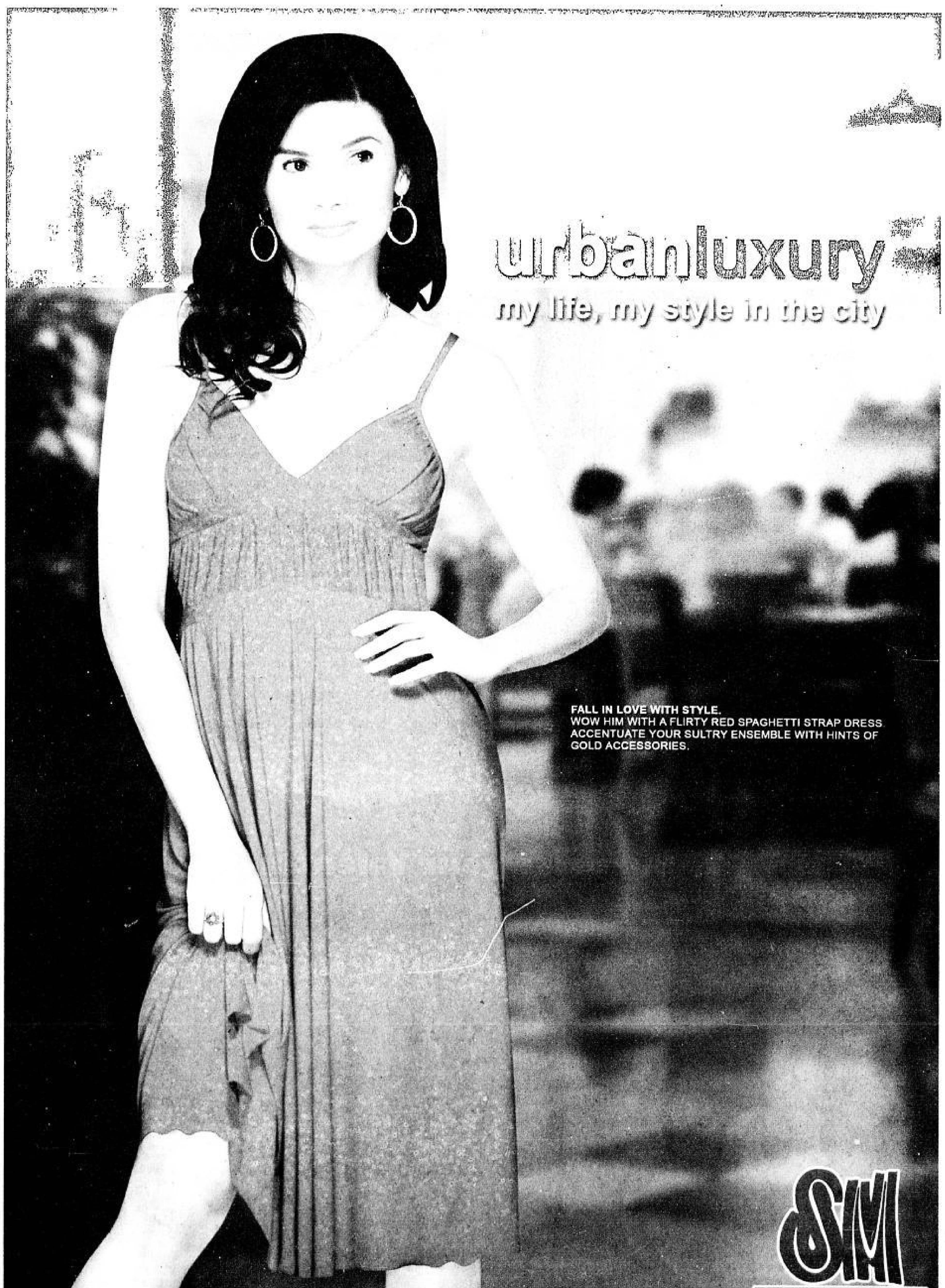
Love overload



It's Valentine's Day and 2bU! joins the fun by showering you with different kinds of love.

Get an overdose of sweetness as people share with you the most romantic things they have done for love. We asked Pinoys from different parts of the world to spill their dating secrets. We have stories on bisexual love, self-love, frustrating love, long-distance love, complicated love, love according to the stars and more.

And in case you didn't have the time to plan your special day, we have alternative gift and date ideas that can rock your world. We're also giving away a lot of prizes—sunglasses, bracelets, surprises from SM and two hot 2-gig iPod Nanos. Start reading and find out how you can win.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Oh, love and its complications!

Love one another and you will be happy. It's as simple and as difficult as that.
—Michael Leunig

By Arlene M. Paredes
2bU! Correspondent

IT WASN'T TOO LONG AGO WHEN THE field for "status" in any personal information sheet could only be filled out with "single" or "married or "widowed." Today, in some official forms, possible answers include "single with a child," "single in domestic partnership," and "single and never married," among others.

Evidently, the times have changed for relationships. There is now a longer list of possible status for everyone. In response to this scenario, personal information sheets have been updated and redesigned to get the real picture of a person's status.

Friendster, meanwhile, limits the status choices to five, and offers a convenient way to describe one's possible relationship with anyone by adding "it's complicated" among the possible answers for one's status.

Friendster.com, a popular social networking site on the Internet, wants to know if a member is single, in a relationship, a domestic partner, married or involved in a "complicated thing." Now, what could be this complicated thing?

Following are true accounts of people who have—at least once—chosen "it's complicated" as their Friendster status, and the more apt phrase for their actual situation:

The ex

Guy A says he's in a complicated relationship because he's now seeing his ex-girlfriend who had dumped him almost 10 years ago. He says it's complicated because he hasn't really broken up with his current girlfriend, who is working overseas. In fact, he is not even sure if he'd leave her for his ex. How can he break up with the girlfriend who has been talking wedding plans with him for the past year and a half? This situation is complicated enough. Three's a crowd, after all.

But here's what makes matters even more complicated: Guy A's ex-girlfriend has been married for over two years now. Guy A is 26 years old.

Guy A says it's complicated because they both know they're doing something wrong. The truth is Guy A knows what he has to do to get out of the complicated status; but Guy A adds: "I am not yet ready to say goodbye (to his ex) again."

Status: It's complicated!

Real Score: Should decide soon.

Online hunter

Lady A is thirtysomething and married. When she joined Friendster, she chose "It's complicated" as her status with a goal in mind —to meet guys. Lady A thought that "It's complicated" sounded intriguing, and guys dig mysteries.

It turned out that Lady A was right because it didn't take long before she made some online guy friends, and developed steamy online romances with some of the men in her growing social network online.

Soon enough, however, Lady A learned that not all guys are thrilled with mysteries. When her husband discovered what she was up to, he angrily confronted her about it. The husband was not happy at all with what he found out, and he hated her for being unfaithful. But all she could say was: "It was all for fun."

Status: It's complicated!

Real Score: Trying to feel single again.

Can you be more complicated in love?

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

Other girlfriend

Lady B never posted that she was in a complicated relationship, but she admits she could do that if she really wants to describe her relationship with this guy with whom she has been in a very ambiguous kind of relationship with for the past several months.

The guy is almost like her boyfriend—they watch movies together, eat out, hold hands, hug, kiss and act like they're together. Except they're not really together. They don't talk about where they are and where they're going. She says they don't talk about it because they wouldn't make any real progress in talking anyway. At least not until he is ready, she clarifies.

It may seem like an ordinary case of allergy against commitment, or the effect of modern times on young liberal minds; but here's the root of the complication: While Lady B is "Single" in Friendster, her guy is "In a Relationship" with someone else, whose photo is on his Friendster profile page, too.

So how do they do what they do together? His actual girlfriend is working overseas, and what they have is a rather complicated, shaky relationship because of the distance.

Status: Single (It's complicated!)

Real Score: Single pending a break-up

Girl who said no

Lady C says she found herself in a complicated setup when she started falling for a very close friend whom she had rejected in the past. He came to her for more than friendship, she hinted they were better off as friends. Then she left the country.

Not too long after, she felt she was missing him, started asking him questions, and was pleased with what came back as answers. They were good and romantic toward each other. But things were only happening online.

Lady C thought things would get clearer when she came home for Christmas. But then she learned that he was already "in a relationship" with another girl by the time she got off the plane.

Lady C realized her relationship was no longer as complicated, and changed her status to "single."

Now, Lady C claims that she has decided to let him go, as they might not be meant for each other. She's still happy when she's with him, and she thinks it's good that they are staying close as friends.

Status: Single (It's [No Longer] complicated!)

Real Score: Almost free

Complicated girl

Lady D gave a straightforward explanation on why she says her status is complicated: that's only because she is complicated. It's not the relationship that's not working. She just could not find ways to make her relationships work.

Or, as she said, she hasn't found "the right one." She's a 28-year-old overseas Filipino worker who's been dating and rejecting guys since she broke up with her boyfriend of several years.

Lady D is now seeing someone. Their dates have so far been fine. He's been calling her, and she's not been saying no whenever he invites her out. They're dating exclusively.

But he's not in her plans. She's trying to get to know him, and she's slowly allowing him into her world.

Lady D says she has yet to figure out what she wants, but what she has now is good enough.

Status: It's complicated!

Real score: Waiting for a sign

The situations described above prove that some people find complications in their relationship only because they or their partners just cannot make a choice. At the end of the day, the choices are pretty simple: Do they complicate matters in their lives, or do they iron out the messy wrinkles for the sake of love?

I read somewhere that falling in love just happens, but really loving someone, that is accepting another person in spite of everything, is a decision you make. In this case, getting into or out of a complicated relationship is also a choice.

Now here's what the people mentioned above have in common in their relationship: they chose to stay. Some of them are still in it. Others have closed the complicated chapter, and are now trying to move on. The rest will still be together this Valentine's Day.

Isn't it funny how a simple word like "love" and phrase like "it's complicated" can have endless possible stories behind them? Is love meant to be complicated? Or does complication only chase love because people, not love, are complicated by nature?

E-mail the author at crypticmess@ gmail.com

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G.

Long, long dista

Some have v
haven't. Ah, t
of romance
thousands o

By Vanessa Arellano Doctor
2bU! Correspondent

THERE ARE THREE THINGS WE NEED to keep in mind whenever we decide to get into any romantic arrangement. First, absence makes the heart grow fonder; second, familiarity breeds contempt; and between those two polar opposites, there are in-betweens.

This is because we thrive on blurring of lines. We want to be with our significant others 24/7, but we also want our space. We wish them to lavish us with attention, yet we also don't want to be smothered. Indeed, there is no single formula for a happy relationship. But, wait, is there really such a thing as a "happy" relationship?

People who live miles away from each other and manage to stay steady for over three months, perhaps, have the biggest challenge. In a kind of relationship where romance is equated to physical presence, staying true to a relationship can be very difficult. Even with the availability of virtual connectors like the mobile phone and the Internet, the number of long distance failures still trump the successes. If you are currently in a long-distance relationship (LDR) or are planning to get into one, take heed of the advice from those who have been there.

Name: Athens

Age: 19

LDR status: Bust

The situation: Hers was the spin-off of "The Terminal." She and her boyfriend of over two years would only see each other if and when she passes Manila to go to New York. Athens lives in Davao, the guy lives in Manila. "The whole duration of what was us was characterized by being physically together only four times, each of those consisted only of a few hours."

The coping mechanism: "We call and text each other every day."

What happened: The guy turned his phone off. "You'd seriously have withdrawal symptoms when you don't have a phone in hand or hear 'The subscriber cannot be reached.'"

Advice:

1) Take turns calling each other. It's gonna cost a lot because you'll be talking loooong.

2) Prepare to be paranoid.

3) Delivery parcel services will be your best friends come "monthsaries," anniversaries and other surprises.

Name: Marc

Age: 23

LDR status: Bust

The situation: His girlfriend left for Canada

to be with her family
Marc works for a call
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on YM every day, sent
mail, called, etc."

What happened:
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Advice:

1) Keep your prom
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unreasonably paranoi

2) Love the phone
turn your phone off an
SMS message.

3) Trust each other
tion. Sometimes it is
breeds an argument.

Name: Dhay

Age: 25

LDR status: "Very m

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Kidnap Cupid!

Burnt lamb chops or, how I learned to love ruining things

By Ryan Fernandez
2bU! Contributor

SHOULD I EVER ACTUALLY RUN into Cupid—that little, rosy-cheeked rascal who flitters about in just a diaper—I'd jump him, tie his wings, steal all his arrows and go on a romance-induced shooting spree, making every lass within a two-mile radius fall for me.

"Hey, darling, you're just my type. Why don't we______."

At the same time, giant pink hearts would cover her eyes and circle around her head. Simple as that.

Alas, love is a slippery thing, and life is no cartoon. We get all in a fluster when our crush doesn't text back right away. We scour Friendster profiles (on anonymous setting, of course) to find out his or her hobbies, and if, heaven forbid, anyone else left flirty comments on their page.

Admit it, we humans are a clumsy lot. If I had a cent for every time I spilled my coffee, tripped on the sidewalk, or bit my tongue just because a cute girl passed by, well... I would have a lot of cents. And yet, despite the challenges—missed connections, infidelities, acne breakouts and all—we humans persist. I persist.

Often a fool for love, I've risked life and limb (and wallet) many times for the lasses: I've braved the perfumed aisles of Victoria's Secret for bargain lingerie; fought through the bustling rush-hour madness of the Midtown Manhattan trains with a giant bouquet of stargazer lilies; heck, I even triggered my apartment building's fire alarm when I overcooked the lamb chops I attempted to serve my date.

True, many women would like their guys to cook, but the sight and smell of a charred husk of ash and bone lightly sprinkled with scallions and minced garlic doesn't really inspire passion.

After that dinner, my date turned to me, doe-eyed and brushed aside my tangle of split-ended bangs: "There, there. You're so cute. I'd date you, but see, I'm an awful girl, and you... you're just too nice for me. I'm just not worth your trouble."

Trouble? Could she have quickly forgotten the smoking debris in the oven? How about the two fire trucks that were already parked across the building? Whether she liked it or not, she just had to be worth every bit of it.

Sometimes I wonder if dating is really just a series of beautiful mishaps, from one trouble to the next, until somewhere along the way, by happenstance or fate, two people start seeing past each other's mistakes, and start loving their accident-prone ways. Wait for the perfect moment to make your move, and you may be waiting for a very long time (or at least until a dating service takes over).

So for anyone who's tired of being the third wheel (or fifth, or seventh); for the girls who ended up with lame prom dates; for the guys who had to sneak through the back door of a restaurant when the real boyfriend arrived; for all of us who spill our coffee, trip or accidentally bite our tongue at the sight of someone we like, let's stop waiting for Cupid to fly by, and go steal his arrows instead.

ODRIGUEZ

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ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

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The situation: Dhay is a half-German, half-Pinoy, born in Germany, but lived and grew up in Davao until she turned 21, during which she moved to London, United Kingdom. Boyfriend is Pinoy born in the Philippines, who lived in Manila until he was 15 before moving to Oklahoma, United States. "There's a six-hour time difference. We travel across the globe to see each other about three to four times a year."

The coping mechanism: Because both of them have stable jobs, paying for the bills was not a problem. "We've coped by having technology around us. We've used the Internet (chat and e-mail) and we talk on the telephone every day."

Advice:

1) Keep constant communications. If possible, at least once (one hour) a day!

2) Be as honest as you can. And be very detailed in all your conversations.

3) Make plans. Plan when you can see each other, when you can travel together, etc.

It takes two to tango. The success or failure of a long-distance relationship, or any kind of relationship for that matter, does not lie solely on one person. It will depend on what we do, how we react to what has been done, or how either parties decide to cope. Love is something we can never win against. The best we can do is be content with the cards we are dealt with and play the game as sincerely as we can.

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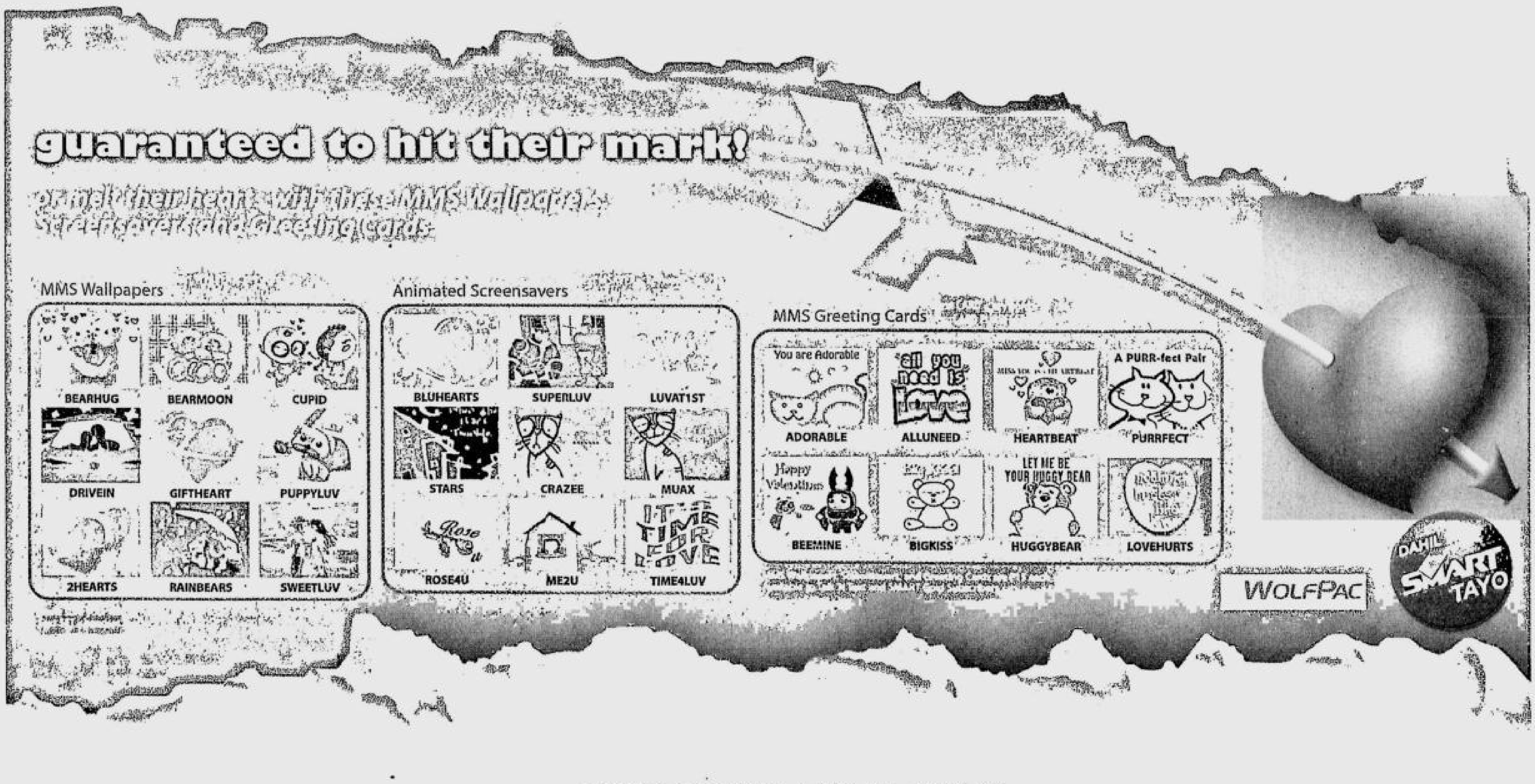

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Being 'bi'

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN I WAS VERY young, I had a huge crush on David Charvet on "Baywatch." I wanted to drown so he could save me from the evil ocean and carry me in his big, strong arms.

The problem was that I was also into Pamela Anderson. I wanted to drown so she could give me mouth-to-mouth while her big boobs pressed my chest.

Now how could I have had a crush on both David Charvet, a male, and Pamela Anderson, a female?

Well, simple. I was bisexual. I still am, actually. I am gay, yes, because I like men emotionally, romantically and sexually. But I also like women—emotionally, romantically and sexually. So I guess I am bisexual.

What I am not is a gay man who's just using the label to receive lesser blows from society.

Being bisexual is no different from being homosexual in the sense that society is still unforgiving of both bisexuals and homosexuals.

One hard thing about being bisexual is the impression that a bisexual person is emotionally and sexually promiscuous. It doesn't mean that just because you like both men and women, you'll bed everyone.

When a bisexual person is in a relationship, the same laws apply, whether the person is with someone of the same or the opposite sex. I mean, I have a girlfriend and there are almost-irresistible beings out there—both male and female—but since I am in a relationship, I strive to be loyal and faithful.

But the best thing about being bisexual is having the best of both worlds. It's also nice to know that on a Saturday night, my chances of scoring a date are bigger than your next-door straight guy. I have always believed that when I realized that I liked guys as well, I didn't close the doors on girls. I just opened my door really wide so that everyone—even the guys—could come in.

As a bisexual man, I have realized that sometimes, looks, appearances or containers do not matter. What matters is what's inside—the kindness, the personality, the sense of humor. I feel blessed to have come to a point where loving someone isn't just based on gender or sexual preference. I feel good knowing that I love souls, not men or women.

I mean, why would I stop myself from loving someone just because he's got a penis?

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

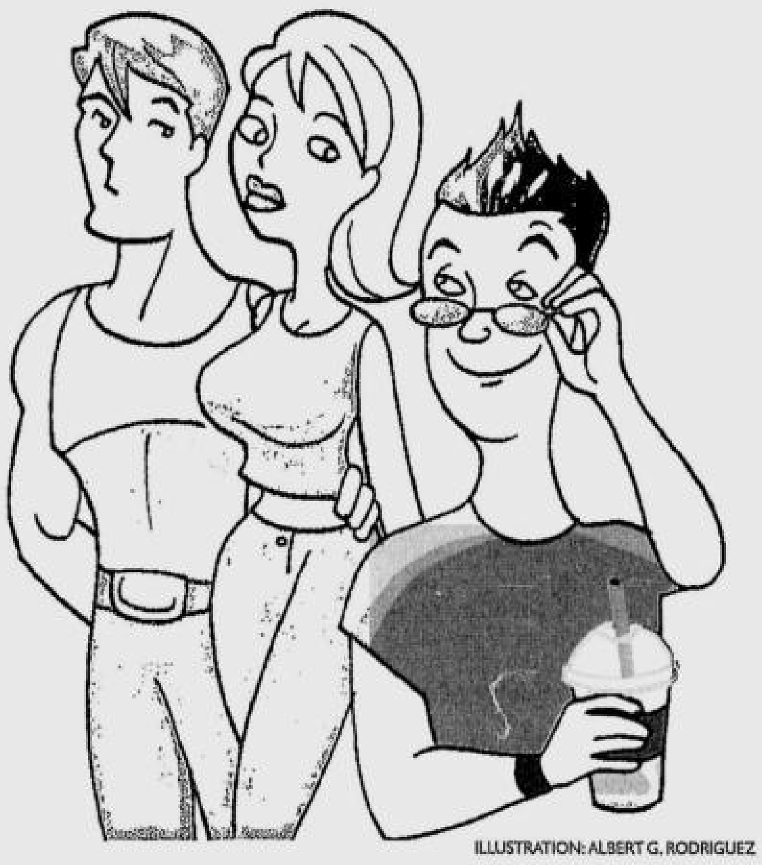

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

Drops of Life

REPLENISH WITH EVERY DROP

Proper hydration means getting the right amount of liquids into our bodies. It is an important aspect of our health, as we simply cannot function properly without constantly replenishing lost fluids. In normal conditions, thirst is our guide to know when it's time to hydrate. However, what our bodies can't tell us is what beverage to drink.

REFRESH YOUR BODY WITH EVERY DROP OF COKE

Recent health studies have shown that all beverages hydrate the body, so it is more a matter of quantity than a specific drink. Choose beverages that you enjoy. And what can be more enjoyable than an ice-cold Coca-Cola? Always keep a beverage within your reach. Keep one at your desk, your car, or your bag, for a quick quench. Our bodies absorb all the water it can from whatever we take in, which means that it naturally makes every drop of Coke a valuable contribution to proper hydration.

MAKE EVERY DROP COUNT

Make sure that everything you eat and drink boosts your health because when it comes to hydration, your body makes every drop count. Grab a Coke and raise a toast to a hydrated body. We at The Coca-Cola Company live to provide you with every product that will satisfy your different and changing hydration needs. We understand that you make every drop of your efforts count, and our role is to keep you enabled in meeting your desires. We make every drop count, for you.

HYDRATION IS NOT ALWAYS SPELLED H-2-O

Keeping the body hydrated is key to good health. People say that eight to twelve glasses of water a day would do the trick. That's a lot of drinking. And sometimes, we do lose count. The good news is, according to health researches, water is not the only source of hydration. Yes, even beverages like Coca-Cola can hydrate you. Now you can spice up your repertoire of fluids by opening a bottle of Coke. It's made up of water with all the nice stuff you enjoy that refreshes both body and soul. That's right, hydration can be spelled as C-O-K-E. Get every drop back. Drink up!

For more information, log on to www.bawatpatakmahalaga.com.ph.

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LIFESTYLE

Tuneful of winners

WE HAVE WINNERS!

We received hundreds and hundreds of entries and have read about so many happy couples that we wish we could give iPods to all of you. Here are two people who obviously worked really hard on their entries.

We hope your loved ones enjoy their new 2-gig iPod Nanos!

See sidebar for details on how you can still join.

Madeline Ong, 19

Ateneo de Manila University

1. **"You're the Inspiration"—Chicago**

Sadly, I have never thought this song to be remotely inspiring. But we have bonded a lot by making fun of its corny lyrics and old-sounding vocals.

2. **"Have I Told You Lately"— Rod Stewart**

He's very supportive and encouraging, and has influenced me to be more positive myself. Not a day goes by when we don't express something we like about each other.

3. **"The Whole of the Moon"—Waterboys**

I have a good stock of theoretical knowledge, while he is more street-smart and experienced. This is the reason we work well together.

4. **"Two of Us"—Aimee Mann**

We consider the car ride a part of every date. This cheerful road trip song is perfect for listening to during our drives.

5. **"Harana"—Parokya ni Edgar**

During the early stages of his courtship, he sang this song for me while playing his guitar, in true serenade fashion.

6. **"Back to You"—John Mayer**

We occasionally get into bitter fights and silent treatments, but we always make up soon after. We can't manage to stay angry with each other for long.

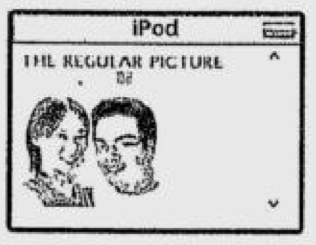
7. **"Tomorrow"—Annie**

When we're feeling under the weather, we often talk about our dreams and ambitions. It never fails to cheer us up.

8. **"A Whole New World"—Aladdin**

Our friendship has improved my

TUNEFUL/ D4



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DAHIL SMART TAYO

SELF-ESTEEM CHRONICLES

The odd girl out

By May Lynn Tan

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

BEING OF CHINESE LINEAGE, I WAS ENrolled by my father in a Chinese school when I was a kid. I was a standout back then, but not in a good way.

My skin was darker in comparison to that of my classmates'; their skin was white as milk. I wasn't only dark I also wasn't chinky-eyed. As if those were not enough to set me apart, I also had thick, unmanageable, wavy hair.

As a kid, being odd wasn't a good thing. I knew I was different and it made my self-confidence suffer. I was unfriendly toward other kids (and they didn't make friends with me, either.) I only had one friend in kindergarten class and that was our neighbor, Marc. I hated school. I was always late. Every morning when my school service came to pick me up, I tightened my grip on our gate, screamed and cried my heart out. The driver of the service had to carry me to board the vehicle. A parent also had to come with me in class.

the dove self-esteem fund

In grade school, nasty classmates called me "Wonder Negra." And every time the topic on Aetas in our social studies class popped up, I was always the butt of jokes. The teasing only made my self-confidence suffer more. I had to eat my *baon* alone. I used to hide near the washroom and cry because I had no friends.

Days of being alone ended when I met my best friend in third grade. She was my seatmate. She was my exact opposite (physically and socially). Her popularity helped me get more friends in school. Everything was going well until the sixth grade; one of her rich popular friends was throwing a swimming party. He invited my best friend to attend. She told him she'd go only if I were invited, too. But the host said, "*Ayoko nga siyang i-*invite, *baka paglublob niya sa* pool *mangitim ang tubig*!"

Upon hearing those words, all the insecurities I thought had gone came rushing back in. I felt terrible not because I wasn't invited; I felt terrible because some people still could not accept me because I was dark-skinned.

High school came and so did acne. I transferred to another school because there was no secondary education in my first school. I had better social skills in high school. I made more friends and I joined different organizations.

In high school, I experimented with different facial washes, bathed with papaya soaps, got expensive hair treatments. High school was a time of wanting to change the old me, the old physical me.

Loving myself

The first year of college was like an extension of high school. I was still not sure of what I wanted. I was still experimenting with facial washes and bleaches, still wanting to have porcelain-white skin and straight hair.

I fell hard for a guy in college. I believed he felt the same way, but the less we saw of each other, the more things about us got blurry. Until now I am still not sure if he did feel the same for me as I felt for him. I did not have the courage to clear things up. Back then, I wished for nothing more but for us to be together. I felt terrible when I heard he had a girlfriend months later.

I cried and I blamed myself for not being pretty enough to be a trophy girlfriend. I thought that if I had been whiter or taller, things would have been different.

What seemed like a curse then is now a blessing. It was a time of self-examination. I remember what my values education teacher in high school told us in class: She said sometimes it's good to look at yourself in the mirror not just to see what's wrong with you, but to "see you." "To see your own beauty despite the imperfections you think you have."

From that I realized I only have myself. I should learn to love everything about me. I could change everything physical, but that wouldn't make me value who I am. I realized I couldn't keep on pleasing others. How the world sees me is not as important as how I see myself.

I began telling myself not to hate what or who I am just because some people failed to value me. My worth is not dependent on how others size it up. I could have cried and cried until I drown in self-pity, but that wouldn't solve anything.

From then on, I began accepting what I have. I stopped experimenting on facial cleansers; I am lucky to have finally found the perfect one for my skin.

I stopped using papaya soaps. I do not wish to be whiter anymore because I am not as dark as I thought I was. I now love being *morena*.

I've realized I don't need to be the best, I don't need to be a trophy girlfriend, and I don't need to change who or what I am to fit in.

When I felt comfortable with my features, other people started to feel good about me, too. There are times when I see my elementary and high school classmates and they tell me I'm pretty. Even my *kabarkada* tells me I look better now. My college friends also tell me I'm pretty.

Though what they say feels good, what I value the most is how I see myself and how I value me.

The Self-Esteem Chronicles of 2bU! is published in partnership with Dove. Dove broadens the standards of beauty and improve self-esteem in order to inspire more women to care for themselves. Make a contribution to the Dove Self-Esteem Fund by purchasing Dove products. Proceeds from the fund are used to run BodyTalk, a self-esteem workshop to help young girls develop a positive self-image.

> She was dark, curly haired and not chinky. And she was supposedly 'Tsinay.' But she learned to love her endowments

Be a part of 2bU! and Dove's Self-Esteem Chronicles

DOVE RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE SELF-Esteem Fund, which will be used to run BodyTalk Workshops for young girls. In this connection, 2bU! wants to read your self-esteem story.

Share your story. Use the following questions as a guide.

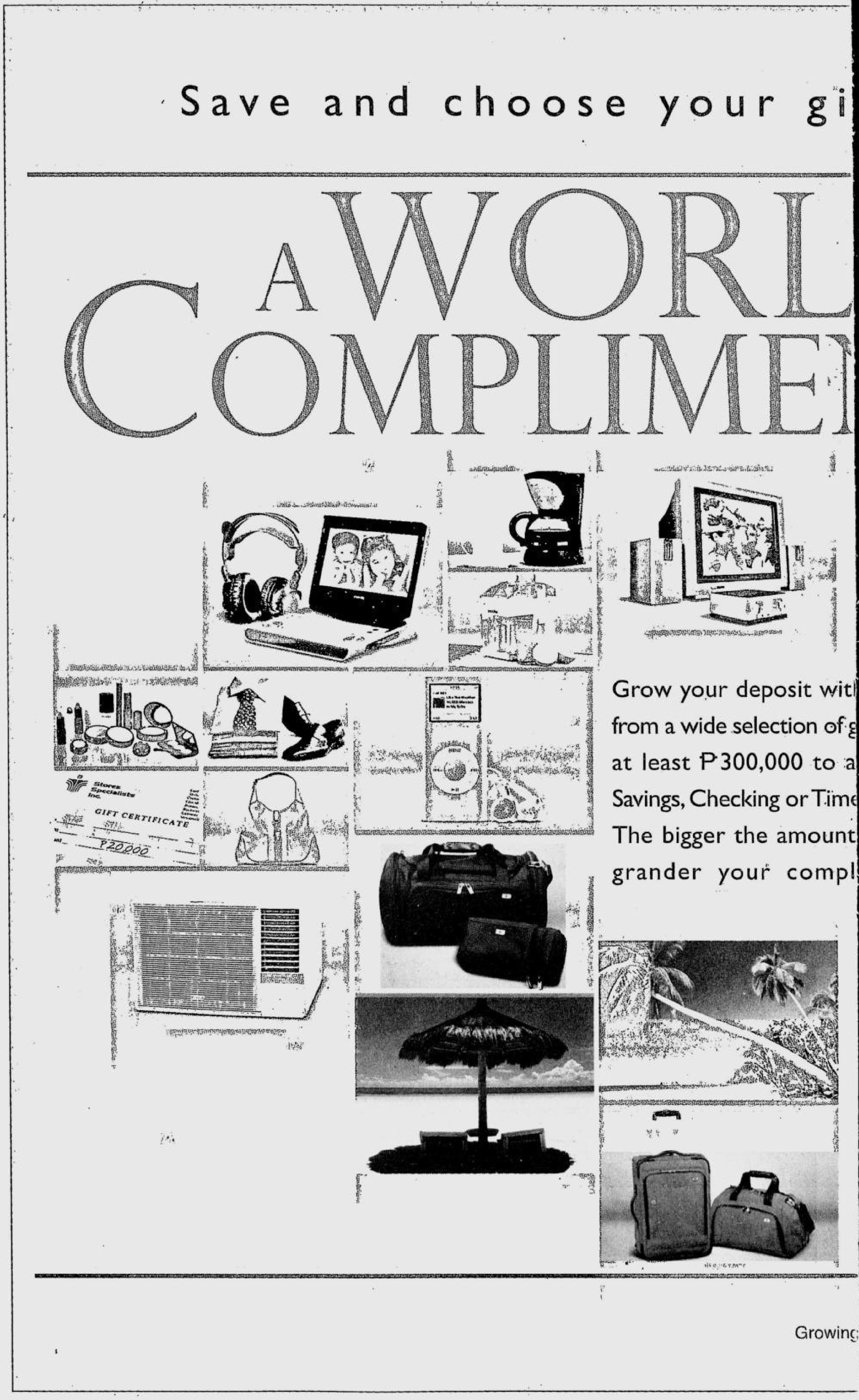
Tell us about your childhood beauty insecurity. How did it develop? Did it make an impact on your self-confidence, your ability to reach your goals and maximize your potential? How did caring for yourself help you overcome your hang-ups? Do you have tips for building a positive self-image?

2bU! and Dove will be running the Self-Esteem Chronicles for the next eight weeks, until March 14. One story will be chosen each week. Deadline of entries is every Saturday. Essays must be a maximum of 4,000 characters.

If your story is selected, it will be published in 2bU! and you will receive Dove gift packs and a limited-edition Dove Statement Tee designed by Kate Torralba.

Don't forget to choose which shirt statement you want ["A dark child can brighten your day"; "A chubby kid can live large"; "A short child can stand tall"; "100% real beauty"; and which size you will need: "I'm petite and a big dreamer" (bust: 26-28 inches); "I'm somewhere in between, but just as sweet" (29-32 inches); "I'm big and beautiful" (33-36 inches)].

E-mail your entries to selfesteemchronicles@gmail.com along with your name, age, contact info, school/office.



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100 YEARS OF KISSES AND MORE KISSES

HERSHEY'S KISSES MAY BE 100 YEARS OLD but they sure don't look a day over 30. This year, Hershey's, the world's most beloved confectionery company, pulls all the stops as it commemorates 100 years of unforgettable Kisses.

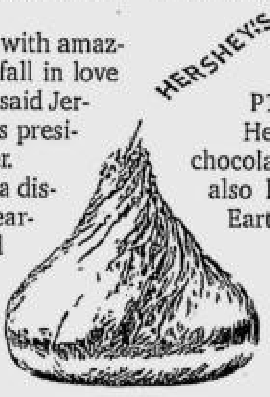
"Hershey's Kisses turning 100 is a historic milestone. No other chocolate confection has stayed as long and endeared millions of people worldwide than Hershey's Kisses. So this year, Hershey's be marking the momentous event with lots of love, happiness and Hershey's Kisses.

"The year 2007 will be packed with amazing surprises that will make you fall in love even more with Hershey's Kisses," said Jerry Santiago, Hershey's Philippines president and regional general manager.

Still wrapped in silver foil with a distinctive paper plume, the 100-year-old flat-bottomed teardrop morsel has gone beyond confection. It has become a bite-sized emblem of happiness and enduring love.

As Erick Ampil, Hershey's group product manager, put it, "Hershey's Kisses are a small but significant symbol of affection. Kisses Chocolates have been making meaningful connections for 100 years, and we look forward to making and celebrating these connections for years to come."

For the centennial celebration, Hershey's Philippines has launched the 100 Years of Unforgettable Kisses promo. It is an SMS-based promotion running Feb. 14-May 24. Hershey's Kisses lovers can have to chance to win P10,000 every day for 100 days.



Out of the 100 winners, Hershey's will draw a grand prize winner who will take home P100,000.

Hershey's Kisses originated from the chocolate plant in Hershey, Pennsylvania, also known as the Sweetest Place on Earth.

Back in 1907, Kisses were still hand-wrapped without the plume. Soon, demand soared and Hershey eventually turned to machine-wrapping in 1921. Milton Hershey's later obtained the trademark for the famous plume in 1924. Currently, Hershey's is churning out 1,300 wrapped and plumed Kisses per minute or more than 80 million Kisses daily.

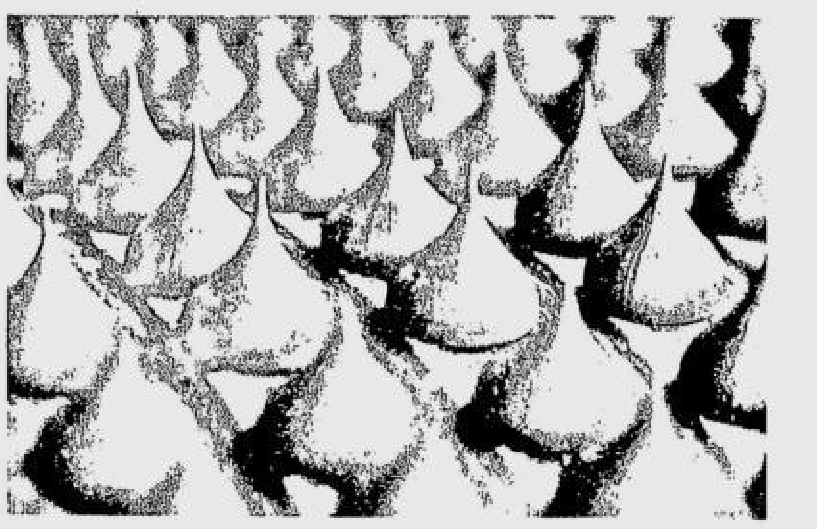
From 1942-1949, production ceased because silver foil was rationed during World War II.

Coming back from a seven-year absence, Hershey's Kisses quickly regained their place as America's favorite milk chocolate morsel. To this day, Hershey's Kisses remain popular as ever.

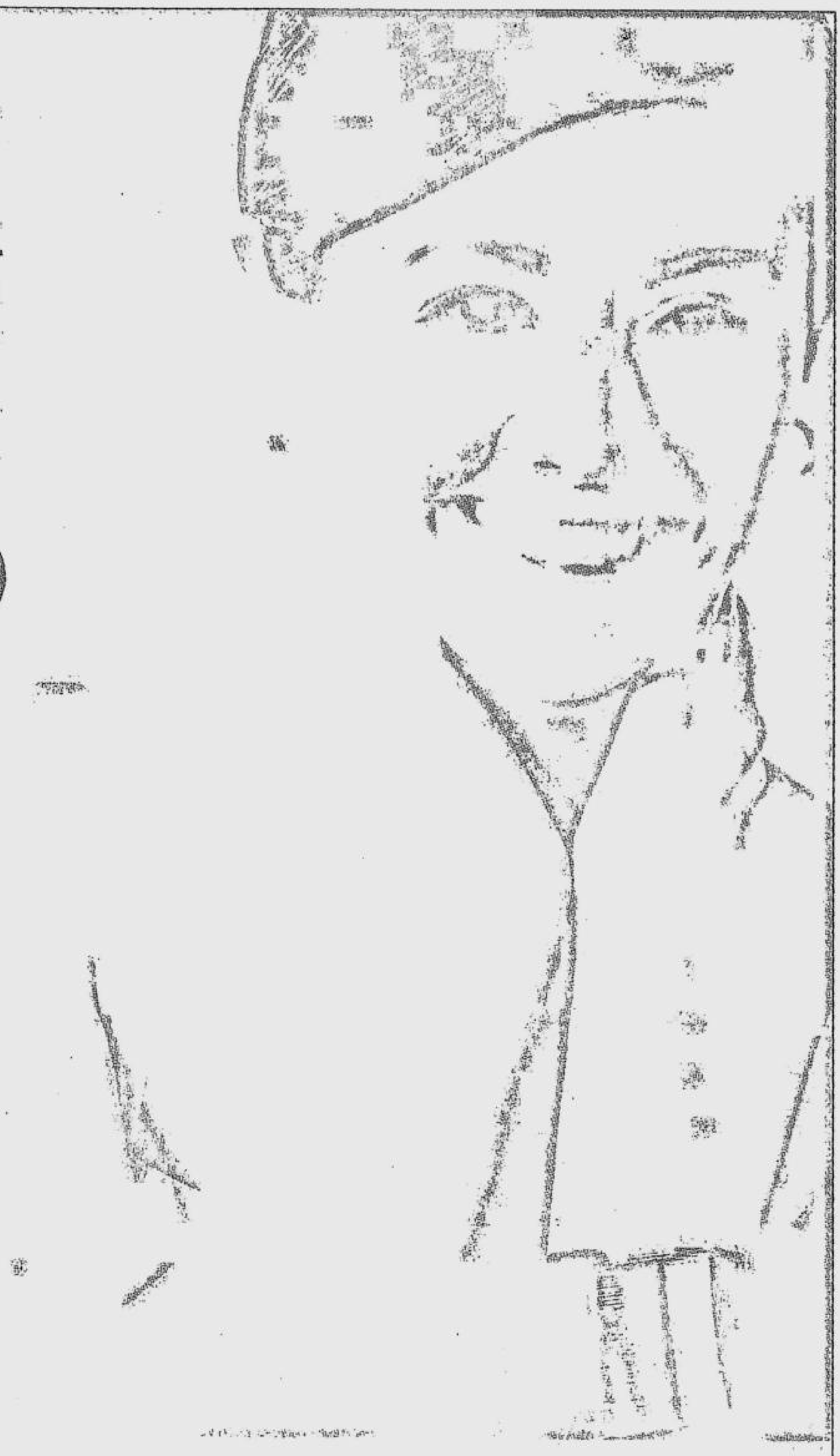
Kisses even inspired a new product—the new Hershey's Kissables. These are colorful, candy-coated morsels made in the familiar Kiss shape with the same Hershey's milk chocolate goodness.

Kissables are also portable in handy packs; they do not melt easily.

It is said that Hershey's Kisses got their name from the "kissing" sound or motion the machine makes during the manufacturing process. Somehow, the way it's made carries over to the way it is being consumed. Aside from being a favorite all-around chocolate treat, Hershey's Kisses are also popular gifts. Countless lovers exchange Kisses on Valentine's Day. Families nibble on Kisses during Christmas and other holidays and special occasions. Even birthdays come with candles, cakes and Kisses.



SWEETEN your romance with lots of love and Hershey's Kisses.



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- iPod Nano 2G
- Sharp 3/4 HP Airconditioner
- Panasonic 21" Flat TV
- Stores Specialists, Inc. Gift Certificate worth Php10,000 or
- Victorinox Travel Bag Set – Victorinox NXT3 Standard Duffel Bag and 3-Compartment Travel Case

For every Php10,000,000 deposit:
- Portable Entertainment Bundle – Philips Portable DVD Player and Altec Lansing Headset
- Home Entertainment Bundle – Philips 25" Flat Screen TV Full Stereo and DVD Player
- Stores Specialists, Inc. Gift Certificate worth Php20,000
- Victorinox Travel Bag Set – Victorinox NXT3 20" Wheeled Upright Trolley and Victorinox NXT3 Duffel Tote or
- Trip for 2 for 3 days/2 nights to any of the following local destinations:
  - Boracay – La Carmela Resort
  - Palawan – Legend Hotel or
  - Bohol – Bohol Beach Club

Plus get the chance to win any of the following prizes in three Raffle Draws:

1st Draw – Complete Home Entertainment Package

2nd Draw – 60-minute Shopping Spree at Greenbelt 4 SSI Stores worth Php500,000

3rd Draw – 5 days/4 nights vacation trip for 4 to the island of Maldives with accommodation plus US$1,000 pocket money

So grow your deposits with BPI, BPI Direct or BPI Family Savings Bank now and start receiving the complimentary gift of your choice with BPI's "A World of Compliments".

See flyers for more details.

Tuneful of winners

From page D1

view of the world. He has taught me to have a better appreciation for life.

9. "Seasons of Love"—Rent

Despite our busy schedules, we spend as much time with each other as we can. Although it's rational to measure life in terms of achievement, we believe it's also fulfilling "to measure in love."

10. "The 10 Signs of Good Nutrition"—Nido jingle

I used to sing this jingle to annoy him, but it eventually grew on us. Now his message ring tone is a clip of me singing the first line. The song is definitely a part of our memories.

Pauline May O. Gervacio, 25

De La Salle-Health Sciences Campus

1. "You Raise Me Up"—Josh Groban

He's always been my inspiration in everything that I do. He guides me in the best way he can. He always makes me feel how special I am. He's very supportive and caring. I think this song perfectly describes how lucky I am to have him.

2. "I Could Not Ask For More"—Edwin McCain

Whenever I hear this song, it just reminds me that everything that I need and everything that I wished for is right here with me. There is a certain chill in this song that is unexplainable. I just feel thankful every day.

3. "Only Time"—Enya

This song was included in "Sweet November," the first movie that we saw together. Back then, we made a promise that whatever happens we would take care of each other and everyday we would be in our own time just like every month would e a November.

4. "When I Met You"—Apo Hiking Society

Back in college I really liked this song although I didn't get to appreciate the words. But when we got together, I found myself hooked to the song because, literally, everything began when I met him.

5. "The Way You Look Tonight"—Frank Sinatra

This is one of my personal favorites. Both of us feel like dancing whenever we hear this. We imagine ourselves in a big masquerade. I really like it when he sings this song to me.

6. "Misty"—Johnny Mathis

There is just something in him that radiates inside and out. We've been together for almost five years, but just like a little girl, sometimes my knees buckle in his mere presence. I just lose myself.

7. "Spend My Life With You"—Eric Benet

We are deeply committed to each other and each of us shares the same dream of going old together. We feel like renewing our commitment with one another whenever we hear this song.

8. "You're My Home"—Lea Salonga

We are the pillars of our relationship. Each building block corresponds to the good and bad things that we've been through. Our love is where our home is at.

9. "Sunday Morning"—Maroon 5

We are a laid-back type of couple. We like to mess around, fool around, just being spontaneous with each other. We even surprise ourselves because we can have so much fun even if we don't do nothing at all.

10. "God Will Make A Way"—Don Moen

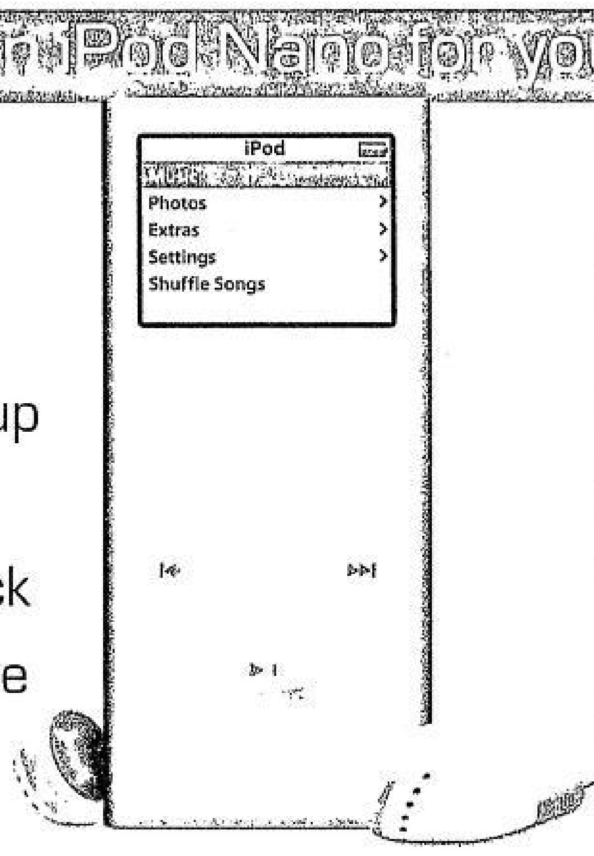
This is one of our favorite inspirational songs. Whenever we are down, we always remind each other that God is with us all the time and He is the reason for every good thing that happened to us.

- We consider ourselves as pillars of our relationship. Each building block corresponds to the good and bad things that we've been through. Our love is where our home is at.

A CLIP from Pauline Gervacio's creative PowerPoint presentation

Win an iPod Nano for your loved one!

Skip the mix tape and load this baby up with the soundtrack to your love story



THE ERA OF MIX TAPES is over. This coming Valentine's Day, Apple and 2bU! want you to present your loved one with the gift of technology, music and romance—by filling any of the iPod incarnations with songs that speak of your relationship.

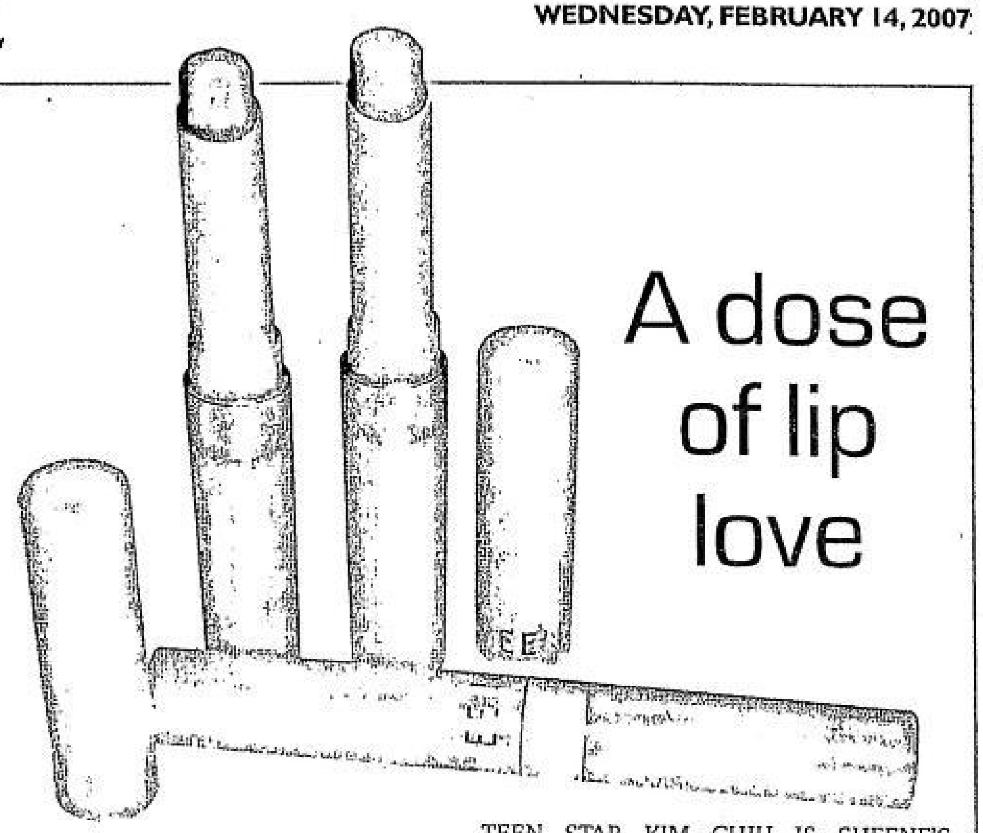
Apple will be giving away two silver 2-gig iPod Nanos to two lucky 2bU! readers.

All you have to do is tell us about 10 songs that you will include in your beloved's playlist and why. Send your list to us along with a photo of the two of you together. Creativity is always a plus. E-mail your entries to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph along with your name, age, school/office and contact info.

Winning entries will be published in 2bU! next week.

Deadline is Feb. 18.

A dose of lip love



SHIMMERY Juicy lipstick

KIM Chiu

TEEN STAR KIM CHIU IS SHEENE'S Philippine image model.

Sheene is Thailand's No. 1 teen cosmetic brand and is now available in the Philippines. Sheene said it has chosen Kim to be its product endorser because she epitomizes what Sheene is—young, trendy and fashionable.

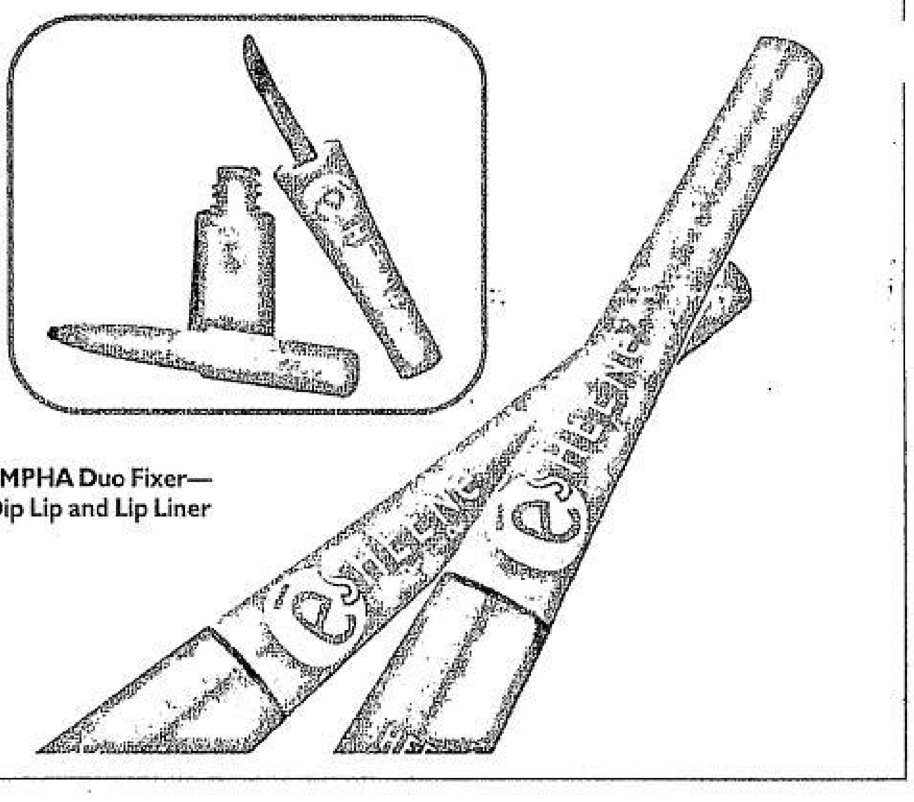
For February, Sheene is giving 10-percent off on selected lip colors such as Sheene Shimmery Juicy Lipstick and Empha Duo Fixer Dip Lip and Lip Liner.

Sheene's Shimmery Juicy Lipstick is smooth and delicate; it has a sweet scent. It has nourishing agents from natural extracts which help maintain moisture on the lips all day long.

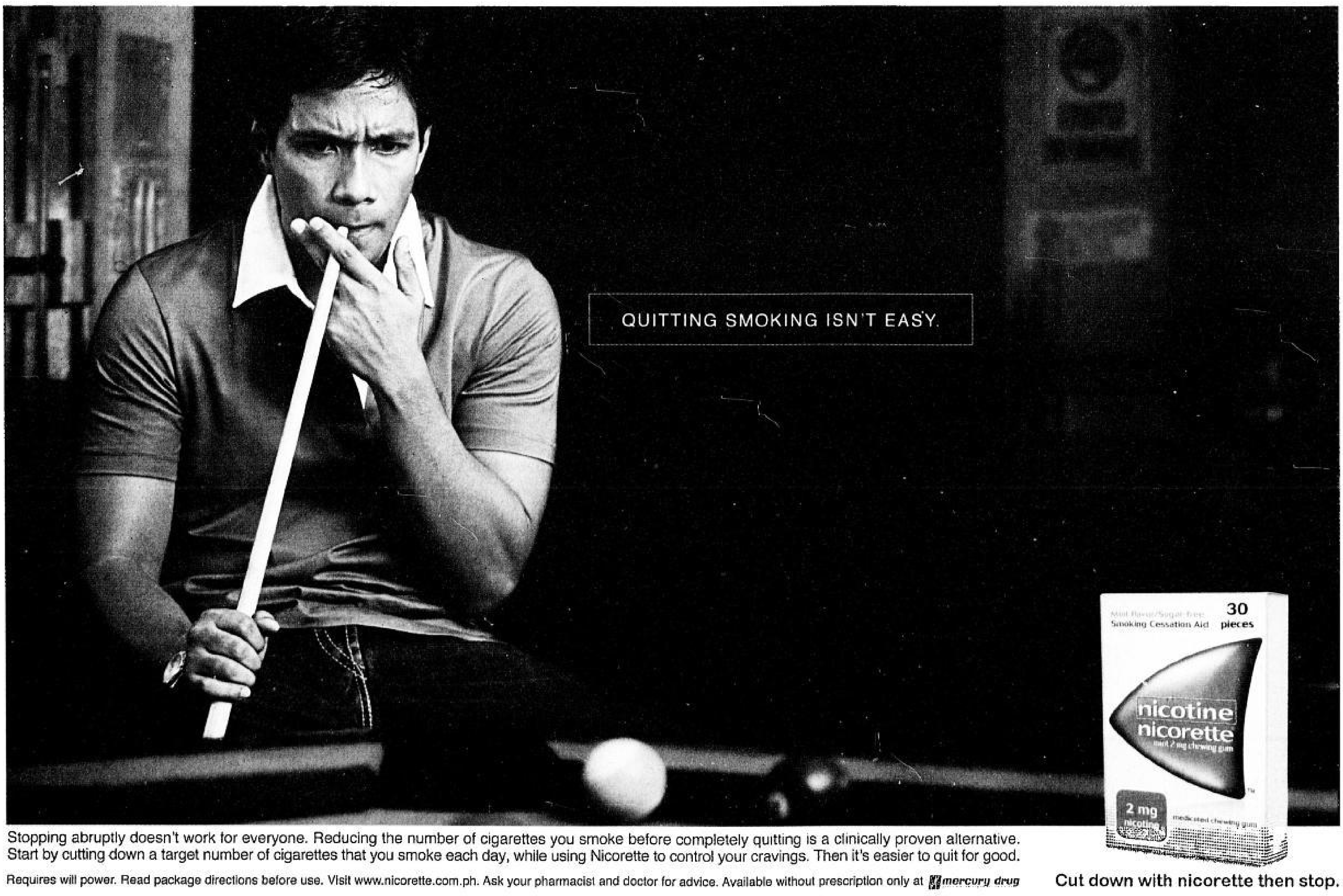
Empha Duo Fixer Dip Lip and Lip Liner are a perfect combination of basic lipstick and lip liner in one chic packaging.

Visit Sheene at the department stores of SM Megamall, SM North Edsa, SM Makati, SM Mall of Asia, SM Sucat, Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Ermita, Robinsons Metroeast, Robinsons Festival Mall, Robinsons Metropolis, The Landmark and New V-Mall.

You can also check out Sheene in selected Watsons outlets as well as NCCC Malls in Davao and Palawan.



EMPHA Duo Fixer—Dip Lip and Lip Liner



Stopping abruptly doesn't work for everyone. Reducing the number of cigarettes you smoke before completely quitting is a clinically proven alternative. Start by cutting down a target number of cigarettes that you smoke each day, while using Nicorette to control your cravings. Then it's easier to quit for good.

Requires will power. Read package directions before use. Visit www.nicorette.com.ph. Ask your pharmacist and doctor for advice. Available without prescription only at mercury drug

Cut down with nicorette then stop.

LIFESTYLE

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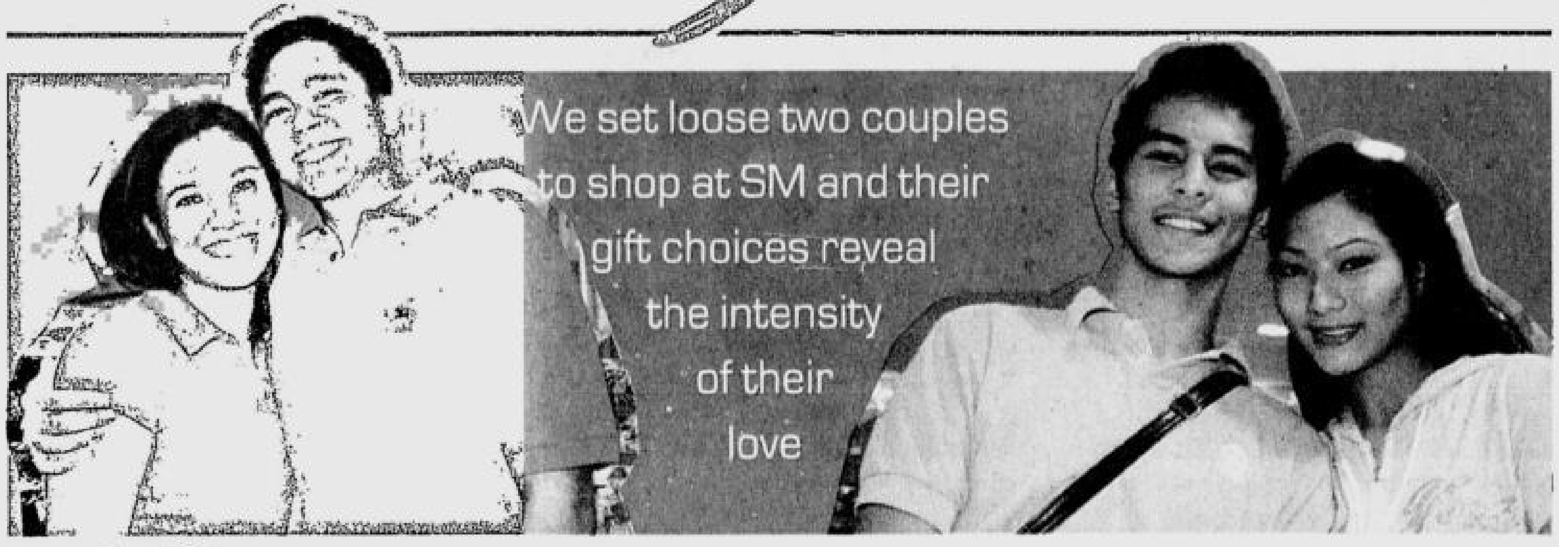
We set loose two couples to shop at SM and their gift choices reveal the intensity of their love

to be young • to be you • to be young • 2bU! • To be you!

Valentine's shopping challenge

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Alanah Torralba

IN THE ANIMATED FILM "Beauty and the Beast," the Beast asks Cogsworth what he could get as a gift for Belle. Cogsworth replies, "Well, there's the usual things: flowers, chocolates, promises you don't intend to keep..."

If your gift to your sweetheart is a word-for-word version of the list that Cogsworth rattled off, then it's time to give your gift-giving skills an overhaul.

Sure, flowers and chocolates are fine, but only if you're sure that the recipient will truly appreciate them.

Otherwise, try looking for more creative presents—or at least something that will really fit the personality of the recipient.

VALENTINE'S SHOPPING/ E2

What counts most is the ability to express ourselves.

Learn from the very best!

Study at:
VERNON TAPALLA'S
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS and THE WRITING INSTITUTE
Confidence Building • Speech
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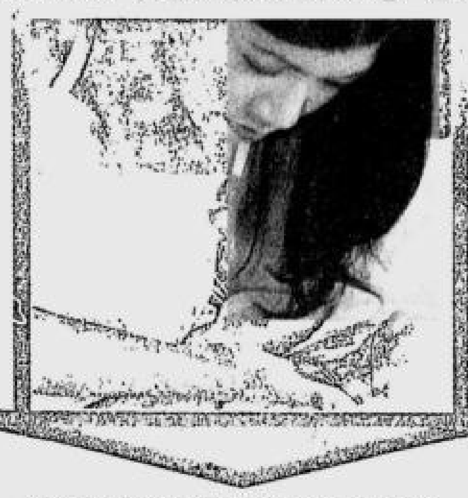
YOUR PROBLEM:
EXCESS FALLING HAIR



SVENSON'S HAIRLOSS Rx:
Hair Reinforcer Ultra-Remedy

Do you see more fallen hair strands on your pillow or every time you shower or style your hair? End your hairloss worries at **Svenson** and stop severe fallout with **Hair Reinforcer Ultra-Remedy.** It will strengthen your brittle strands, protect your hair from excessive shedding and maintain its naturally lush look.

You don't have to suffer from hairloss. Take the effective Svenson solution for your falling hair problem and look forward to more lushness and thickness. Call Svenson for a FREE hair and scalp check-up.

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BINONDO 11/F Federal Tower Bldg.
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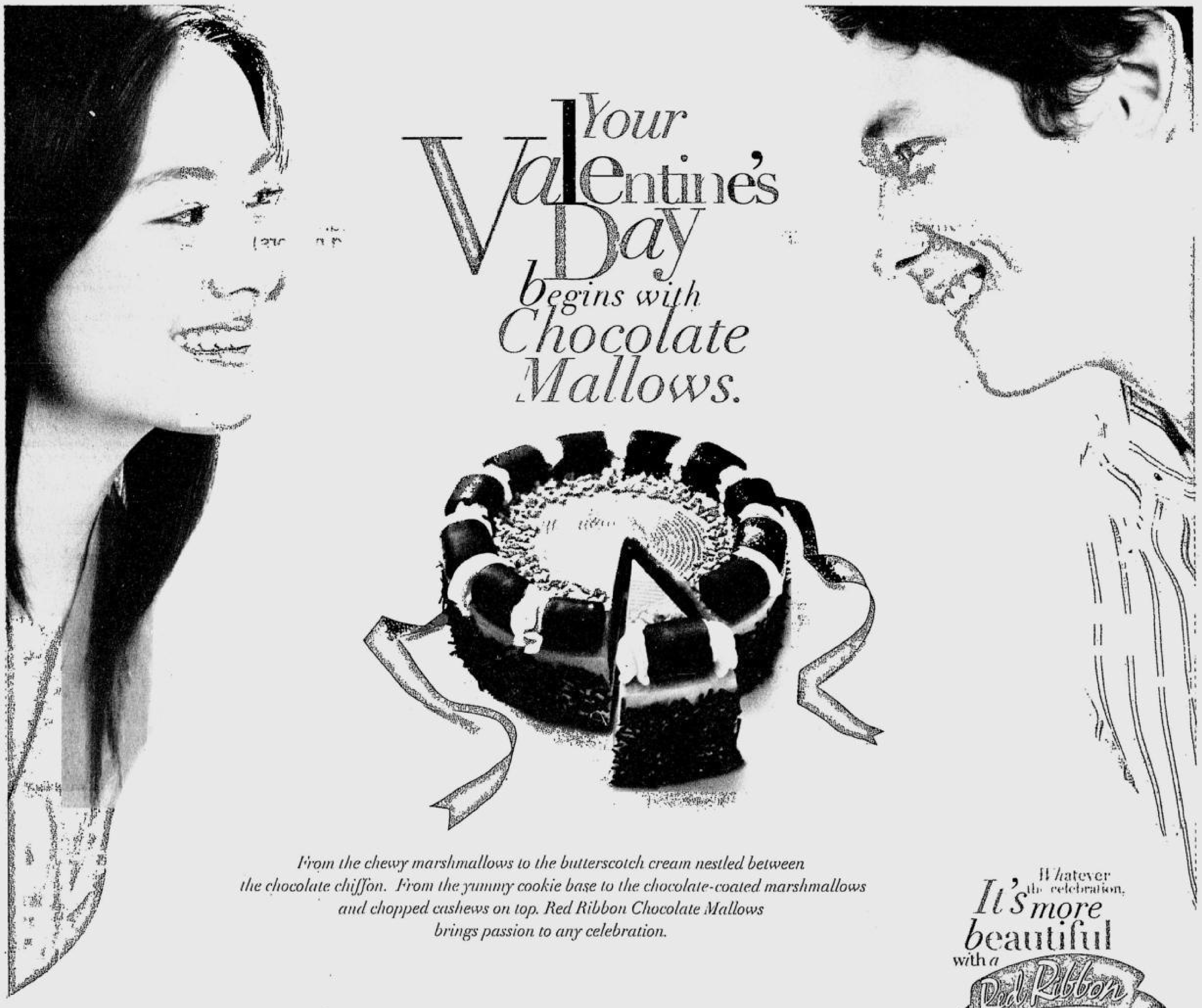
CEBU TEL: 234-0851 7/F Kappel Centre

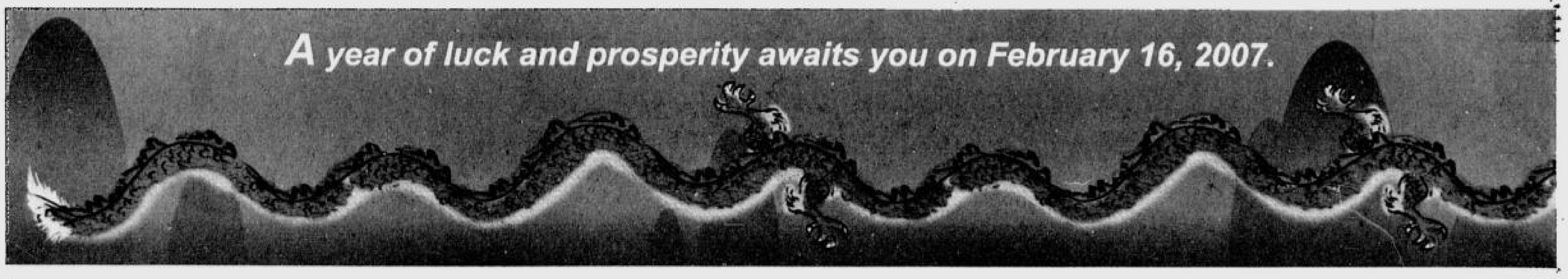


From the chewy marshmallows to the butterscotch cream nestled between the chocolate chiffon. From the yummy cookie base to the chocolate-coated marshmallows and chopped cashews on top. Red Ribbon Chocolate Mallows brings passion to any celebration.

Whatever the celebration, It's more beautiful with a Red Ribbon

Free cake knife for every purchase of Chocolate Mallows (regular, medium or large cake).

Promo period: February 1 to 28, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit # 0107, Series of 2007.

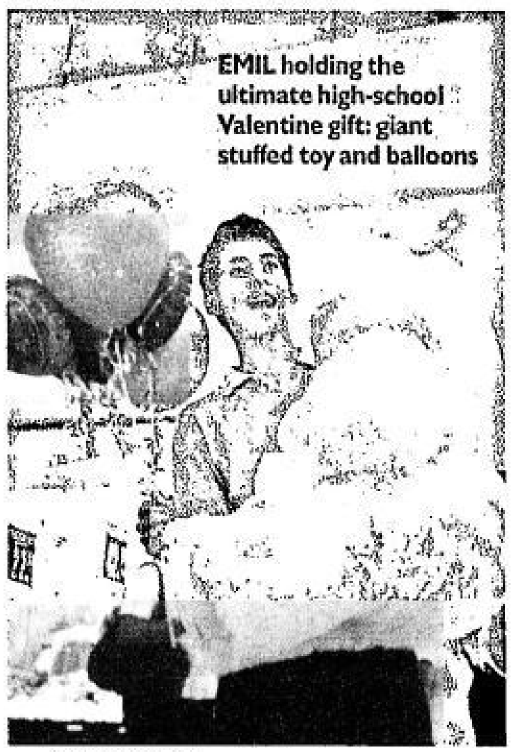

A year of luck and prosperity awaits you on February 16, 2007.

PICKING out a ring from the jewelry counter

TAKING a breather in the Home and Furniture section

DYNAMIC duo Clarissa Paula Dacayo and Ralph Ramos

ADDING up the prices of their purchases



EMIL holding the ultimate high-school Valentine gift: giant stuffed toy and balloons

HOLDING out a chocolate bouquet

SWEET pair Che-An Kubota and Emil Molina

Two couples raced around SM Makati in search of the perfect Valentine presents

2bU! Valentine's shopping challenge

From page E1

If the person in question likes Chocnut and *sampaguita* better than hotel-made truffles and long-stemmed roses, why insist on giving the more cliché present?

How creative are 2bU! readers at gift-giving? We picked out two pairs with completely different shopping personalities and let them loose in the SM Department Store with P5,000 in gift certificates and 15 minutes to shop.

They faced two challenges: Find a gift for him or her, and determine the perfect ingredients for a romantic night. They came back with surprising (and not-so-surprising) choices for their loved ones.

Who are the better shoppers? E-mail your choice to Ls_2bU@inquirer.com.ph and let us know why you think so. Include your name, age, school or office, and contact details with your explanation and win P2,000 GCs from SM.

Che-An Kubota, 20 and Emil Molina, 19

BEFORE WE AMBUSHED CHE AND Emil in the mall, they were walking around like there was no one else in the world. It took quite a bit of jumping around to catch their attention, but when we finally got to them, they readily agreed to do the shopping challenge. Surprisingly, instead of sticking together like magnets, the pair agreed to split up to get the things they needed faster.

Shopping style: Divide and conquer

Shopping picks: Che and Emil went for the semi-predictable route, but added a few personal touches to their gifts. "We've been together for a month," Che explained. "We're still enjoying our honeymoon stage." This was shown by their choice of gifts: chocolates, flowers, balloons and stuffed toys, complete with explanations that sometimes sounded like corny pickup lines. However, they finished the challenge on time and maximized the budget.

What they bought:

For him:

Big Rock compilation CD, P350. "It's a rock CD of the songs he likes. It's to show that he rocks my world."

Chocolate bouquet, P252.50. "He likes chocolates better than flowers, but it's still in bouquet form, so sweet *pa rin*."

Nivea Cool Grooming Kit, P199.75. "I care for him a lot, so I want him to care for his personal grooming as well."

Maxim magazine, P140. Che, who is a model, appears in an advertisement in the magazine. "That's why I'm getting it for him!"

For her:

Flip-flops, P169.75. "We always go out, and I want her to be comfortable while we walk around. She likes slippers, too."

Ever Bilena makeup palette, P200. "She likes playing around with makeup."

Artificial rose, P79.75. "Artificial, so I can say that like my love, the flower will never die."

Hello Kitty watch, P1,379.75. "She's always late for our dates, so this might help."

Silver ring, P450. "Because she lost the ring I gave her!"

For the night:

Fresh flower bouquet, P299.75. "I always give her flowers," Emil said. "So this would be great for the night."

Balloons, P19.75 each. "Decoration for the date."

Digital memory card, P1,400. "I want a lot of photos of the night," Che explained.

Total: P4,980.25

Clarissa Paula Dacayo, 22, and Ralph Ramos, 22

DRESSED IN MATCHING RED SPORTS shirts, Clarissa and Ralph acted every bit like a comedy duo during the entire shopping challenge. Although pressed for time, they still paused to giggle over racy lingerie and flop around on bed displays at the department store. They finished the shopping challenge a few minutes late, but ended up with varied items from different areas of the store.

Shopping style: the human battering ram (hold on and barrel through the store together)

Shopping picks: Clang and Ralph opted for more practical presents and chose gifts that represented each other's personalities instead of going for an all-out Valentine theme. Most of the items they purchased were food. "Lately, we've been vegging out with DVDs and food in order to save money for the summer," Clarissa said. "Just give us a pile of chips and drinks and we'll make a night out of it."

Ralph said, "We had fun racing around the mall looking for stuff. The difficult part was that you have to think while you're looking for places to get them, and goofing around ate up a lot of our time."

What they bought:

For him:

FCUK perfume, P1,110. "He likes cologne, so I got this for him."

For her:

Ferrero Rocher chocolate, P466.50. "It's her favorite chocolate."

Tulip, P149.75. "I think it's more sweet to get a single flower, and this tulip was pretty."

Infrared heat massager. "*Laging masakit likod niya*, so this one's to help her relax."

For a romantic night:

Michael Buble CD, P450. "Music to set the mood for the night."

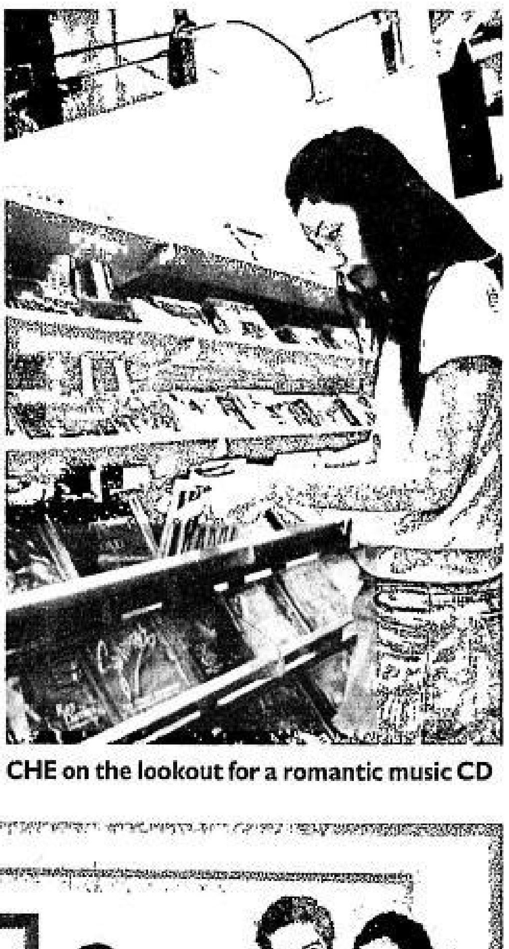
Pillows, P99.75 each. "Great for lounging around on the sofa or floor."

Camera, P1,200, and picture frame, P99.75. "We're picture people, so we'd take photos to record the night and keep them afterward."

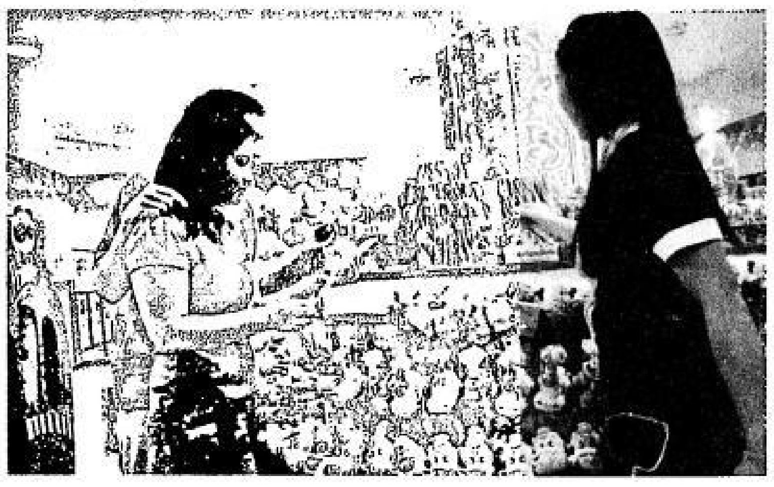
Junk food. "All our favorite junk food!"

Total: P4,806.75

GRABBING a box of Ferrero Rocher



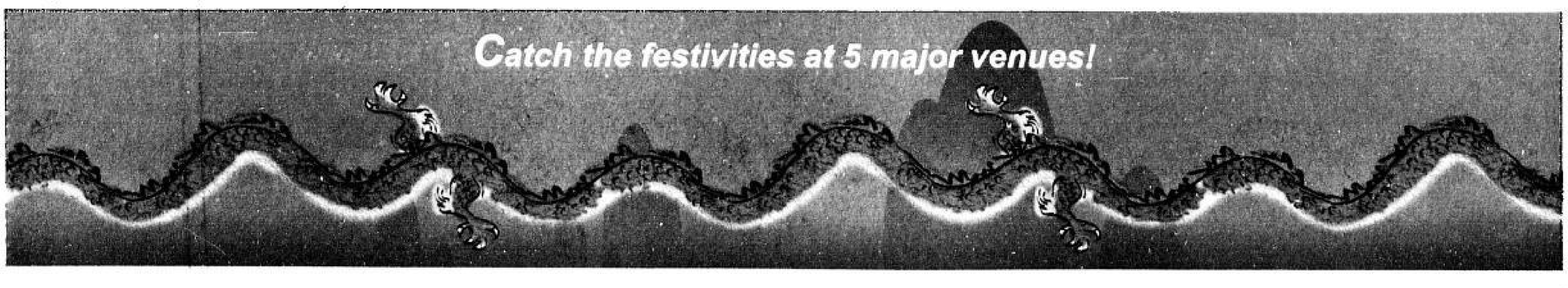
CHE on the lookout for a romantic music CD



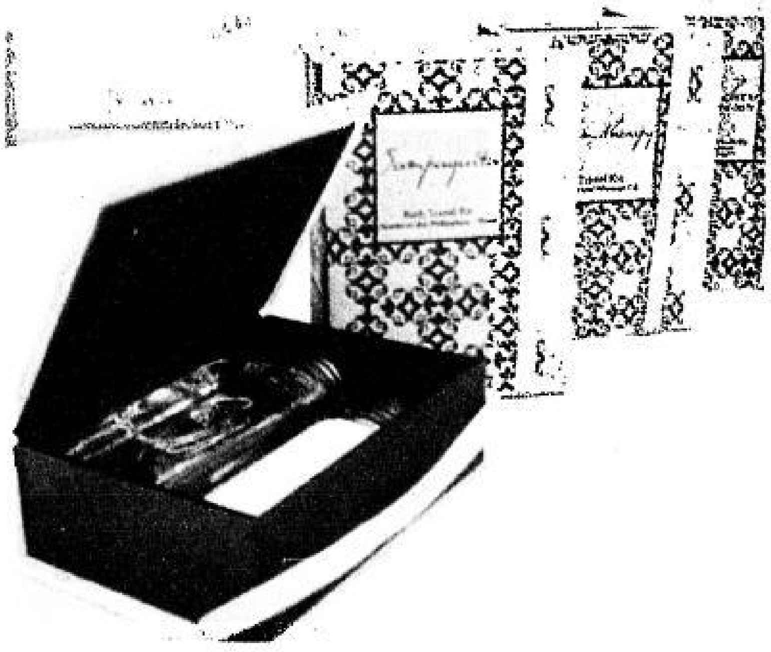
SEARCHING for sweets at the candy counter

COUPLES gathered at the SM Prestige Lounge before the shopping challenge

GOOFING around with racy lingerie



Catch the festivities at 5 major venues!



Assorted fabric-covered boxes from Indie Art
Boxes in colorful prints and patterns. The boxes include Sampaguita Scented Bath Travel Kit, Cocoa-Manggas Scented Bath Travel Kit, Aromatherapy Oil Travel Kit. With Ginger Chew Candy.

Costs P195 each set. Call 0927-5530356; indieartcollection@gmail.com

WWF-Philippines membership
Membership for only P600 a year or P2 a day. The convenient gift to show your loved one (and the environment) that you care.

Visit www.wwf.org.ph; call 8496-WWF (8496-693).

Bean bags from Team Manila
Cuddle and lounge in love's embrace with Team Manila's bean bags.

Visit http://teammanila.com; or Manila Graphic Designed Lifestyle Store; available at Unit 2 Ecoville Townhouses Metropolitan Avenue Makati; and 2/F, Independent Lifestyle Section, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center Makati.

cinefilipino
Official Philippine Entry Best Foreign Language Film, 79th OSCAR Awards
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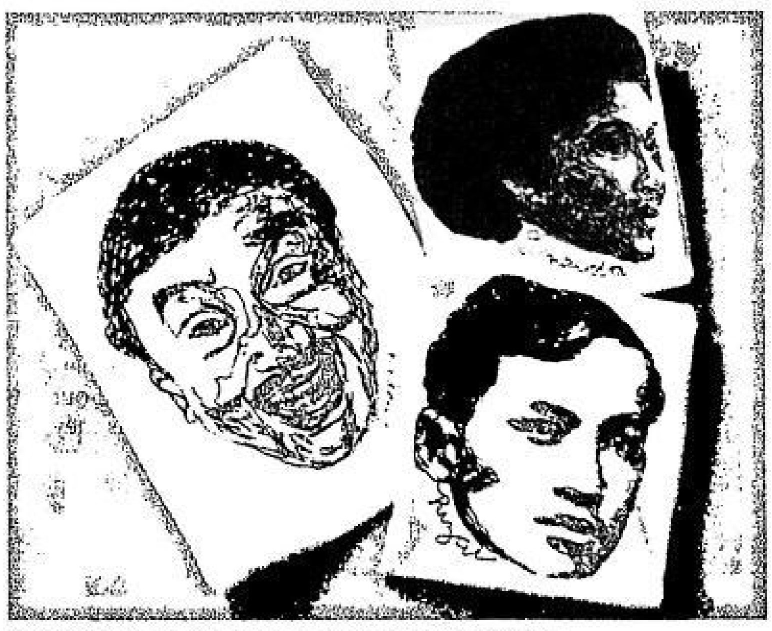
NATHAN LOPEZ
Ang Pagdadalaga ni MAXIMO OLIVEROS
DVD

'Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros' DVD
It's finally available! Fall in love all over again with one of cinema's beloved characters, Maximo Oliveros.

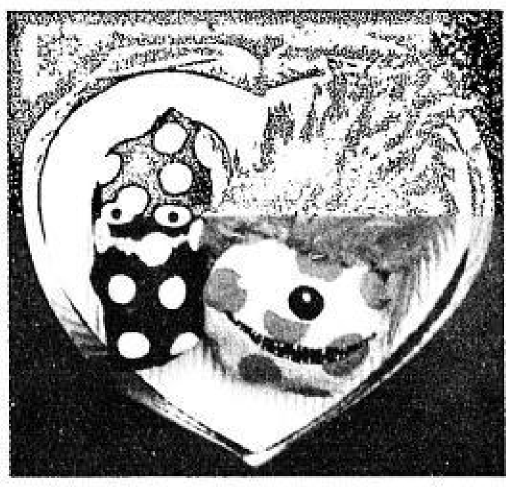
At P450, signed by Nathan "Maxi" Lopez, plus P85 for shipping. Can pay by G-Cash. E-mail felixdcut@yahoo.com or call 0917-8574011.

Alternative gift guide



Graphic tees from Lupang Hinirang Shirts
Iconic shirts for the artsy couple at P260 each. Call 0917-4482771.

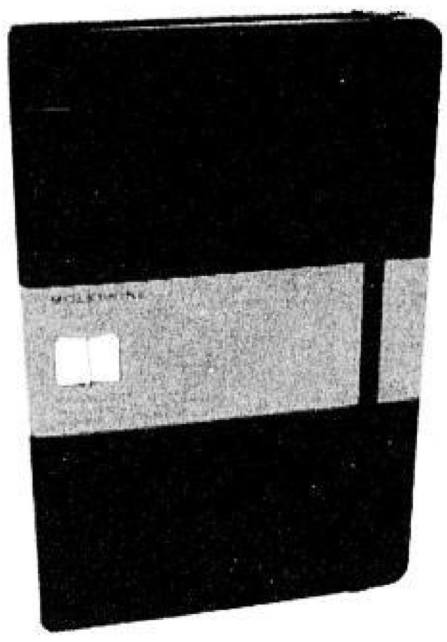
From page E4

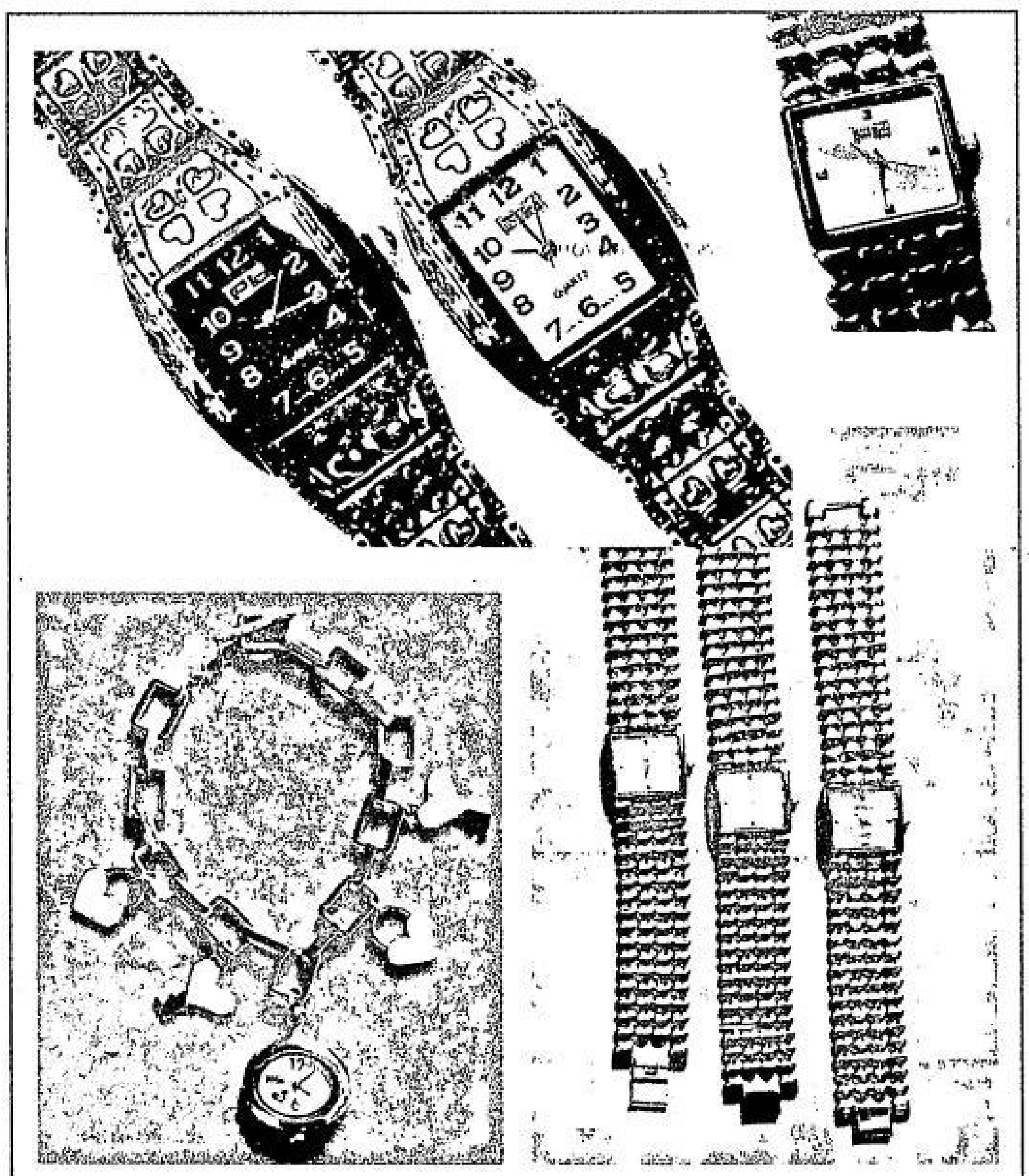


Odd Love from Oddball Friends
These limited-edition Oddballs are a perfect alternative gift idea.
At P315 each.

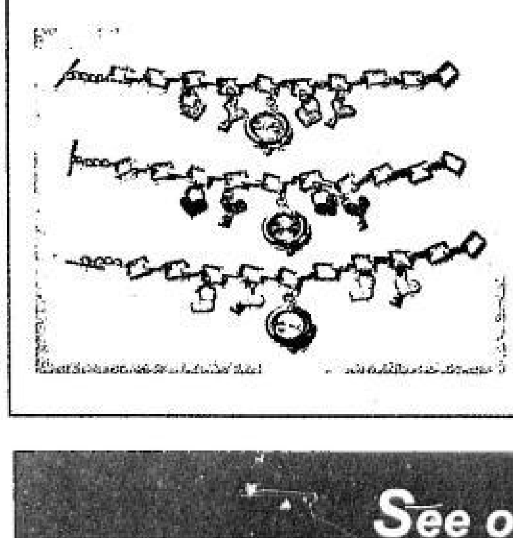
Call 0920-3805963; visit originaloddball.multiply.com or powernapcollective.blogspot.com

Moleskine notebooks
You can never go wrong with these classic and definitely romantic journals.
Visit http://moleskineph.com; e-mail info@moleskineph.com.

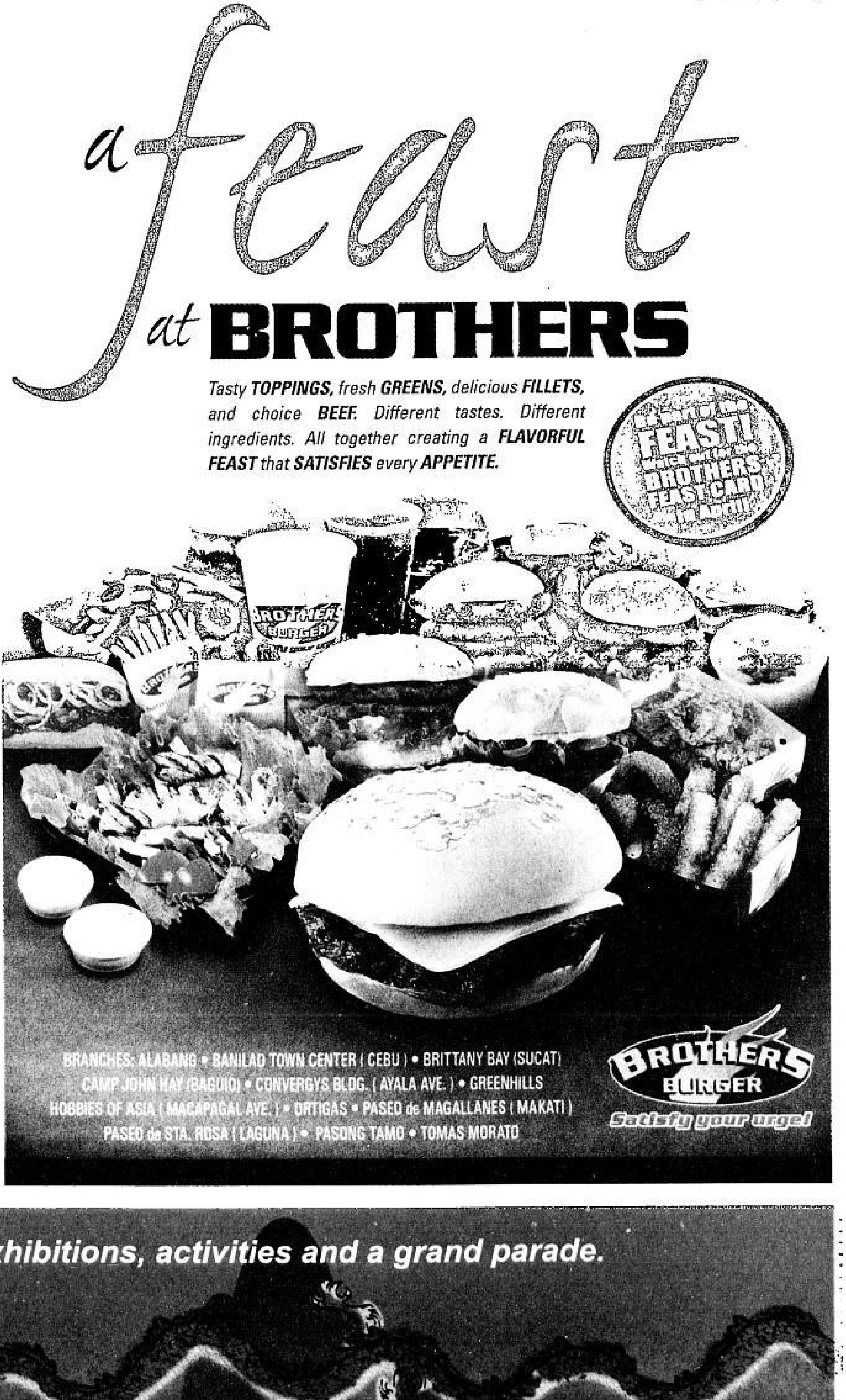




Love for your wrist



PACIFIC BLUE WATCHES HAS come up with its Special Valentine Collection, which consists of especially designed bracelets with heart-shaped metals. Also part of the collection are watch faces with red-heart designs in them. Pacific Blue watches are available at all SM department stores.



Tasty TOPPINGS, fresh GREENS, delicious FILLETS, and choice BEEF. Different tastes. Different ingredients. All together creating a FLAVORFUL FEAST that SATISFIES every APPETITE.

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HOBBIES OF ASIA (MACAPAGAL AVE.) • ORTIGAS • PASEO de MAGALLANES (MAKATI)
PASEO de STA. ROSA (LAGUNA) • PASONG TAMO • TOMAS MORATO

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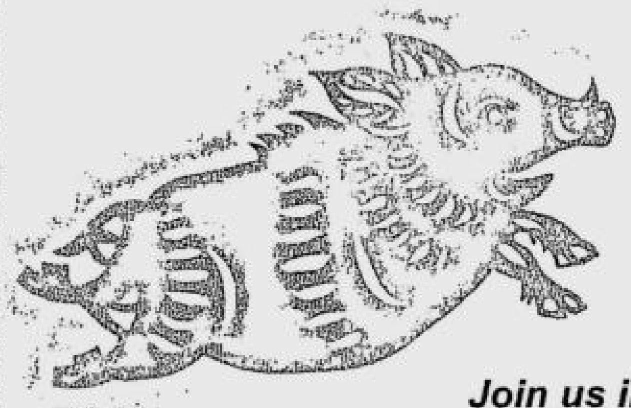
Alternative
gift guide

Compiled by Tammy David and Zee Castro
2bU! Correspondent

No bears! No flowers! No five-course meals! Not even chocolate! Enough of the usual sweet nothing-type of gifts. Here are some gift ideas that will surely leave a mark and definitely won't end up in a bonfire some day

ALTERNATIVE/ E3



Let good fortune reign as we welcome the Year of the Fire Pig!

Join us in our festivities as we welcome the Chinese New Year on February 16, 2007 with our exciting lineup of activities! Watch the performances of our two 500 ft. dragons, one in Makati and Ortigas, and one in Greenhills and Quezon Avenue. See the culmination of the celebrations when these two unite to form the Philippines' longest dragon - at 1,000 ft. - in Binondo! It's a day of fun and prosperity all brought to you by Sun Life Financial.

Catch the celebrations at these venues:

Makati – Sun Life Financial Office, The Enterprise Center

7:30am – 7:40am	Dragon Dance at Paseo de Roxas and Dela Rosa sidewalk
7:40am – 8:15am	Motorcade
8:15am – 8:25am	Dragon Dance at The Enterprise Center
8:30am – 9:30am	Contortionists Show

Ortigas – Sun Life Financial Office, Orient Square Building

10:00am – 10:10am	Dragon Dance
10:20am – 10:45am	Motorcade
10:45am –11:00am	Dragon Dance

Binondo – Sun Life Financial Office, Binondo

3:00pm – 6:00pm	2 dragons unite to form the 1,000 ft. dragon and lead the Chinatown Development Authority motorcade and Float Parade

Quezon City – Sun Life Financial Store, Orcel Building II, Quezon Avenue

8:00am – 8:15am	Dragon Dance at Sun Life Financial Store
8:15am – 8:45am	Motorcade
8:45am – 9:00am	Dragon Dance at Sun Life Financial Store
9:00am – 9:30am	Office Blessing
10:00am – 10:30am	Session w/ Feng Shui Master
10:30am – 11:00am	Investment Forum

Greenhills – Sun Life Financial Store, E-Square Building, Ortigas Avenue, San Juan

1:00pm – 1:15pm	Dragon Dance at Sun Life Financial Store
1:15pm – 1:45pm	Motorcade
1:45pm – 2:00pm	Dragon Dance at Sun Life Financial Store
2:00pm – 2:30pm	Office Blessing
2:30pm – 3:00pm	Session w/ Feng Shui Master
3:00pm – 3:30pm	Investment Forum

猪

Plus, a performance from the Philippines' longest dragon!

Sun Life Financial
永明金融

LIFESTYLE

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle
Text us your feedback:
inquirer life name/age/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Alternative Valentine's date ideas

Dump the predictable clichés. Be creative. Date with a flair

By Walter Ang
2bU! Correspondent

WE KNOW THE FORMULA for Valentine's Day dates. You have the de rigueur chocolates, flowers, fancy dinners, soft music, the works. It's all fun and exciting and romantic, but if you'd rather not deal with the crowds, the traffic and the endless list of things that could go wrong, you can also try 2bU!'s "alterna-date" ideas.

We've come up with a list of date ideas you can try on the day of love. Hey, your time together can be just as romantic even without candlelight.

Take a hike

Arrange for a private walking tour of vibrant Escolta, bustling Chinatown or colorful Quiapo—any area of downtown Manila you haven't been to before. If you've never been to these parts of the city, you might as well visit them with someone you like, right? The nostalgia in those old Art-Deco buildings, the aromas of the merchandise, the vigor of the people are all ingredients in this on-your-feet date. If you're feeling brave, you can go on your own and revel in the joy of the unplanned itinerary. If you'd rather have someone guide you along, check out the websites of streetwalkers Ivan ManDy (www.oldmanilawalks. com) and Carlos Celdran (http://celdrantours.blogspot.com/).

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

Picnic in the city

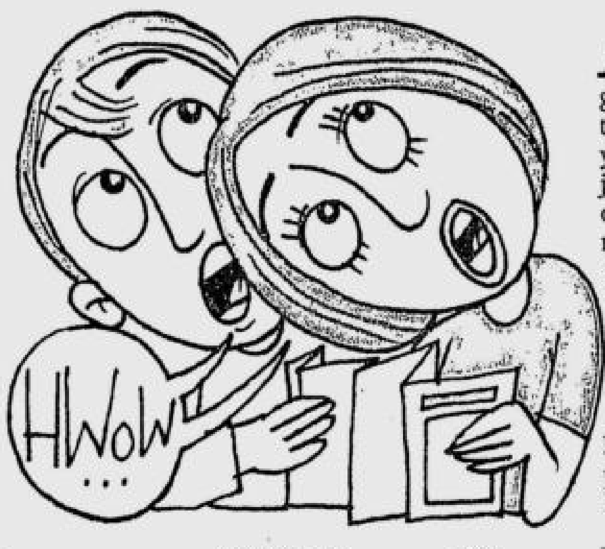
LUNES... NG TAYO'Y UNANG NAGKITAA

Forget Tagaytay or Baguio. Have a picnic in the middle of the city. Where? Away from the maddening crowd, you can spend a nice quiet evening together on the rooftop of a building. Sitting on your gingham blanket, you can dine under a canopy of stars and amidst the glow of city lights. You heard right, a nighttime picnic. The sound of the occasional car horn from down below will only add to the urban flair. You know what kind of soundtrack would make it feel like a scene right out of a movie? Bring along a transistor radio and tune in to an AM station that plays those old Tagalog love songs. The crackle and static is all part of the fun.

You can make your cake (and eat it too!)

Try learning something you both have never tried. Not only will you experience or learn something new, you create a new memory for both of you to share. Why not learn how to ballroom dance? Why not take a one-day cooking class? You don't have to say sweet nothings to each other but you can surely bake it right up. Remember the movie "Ghost"? Be your own Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze: Enroll in a pottery class. The Instituto Cervantes (http://manila.cervantes.es/) has some upcoming gustatory-related classes like "Mastering Spanish Wine" and "Introduction to Spanish Cuisine."

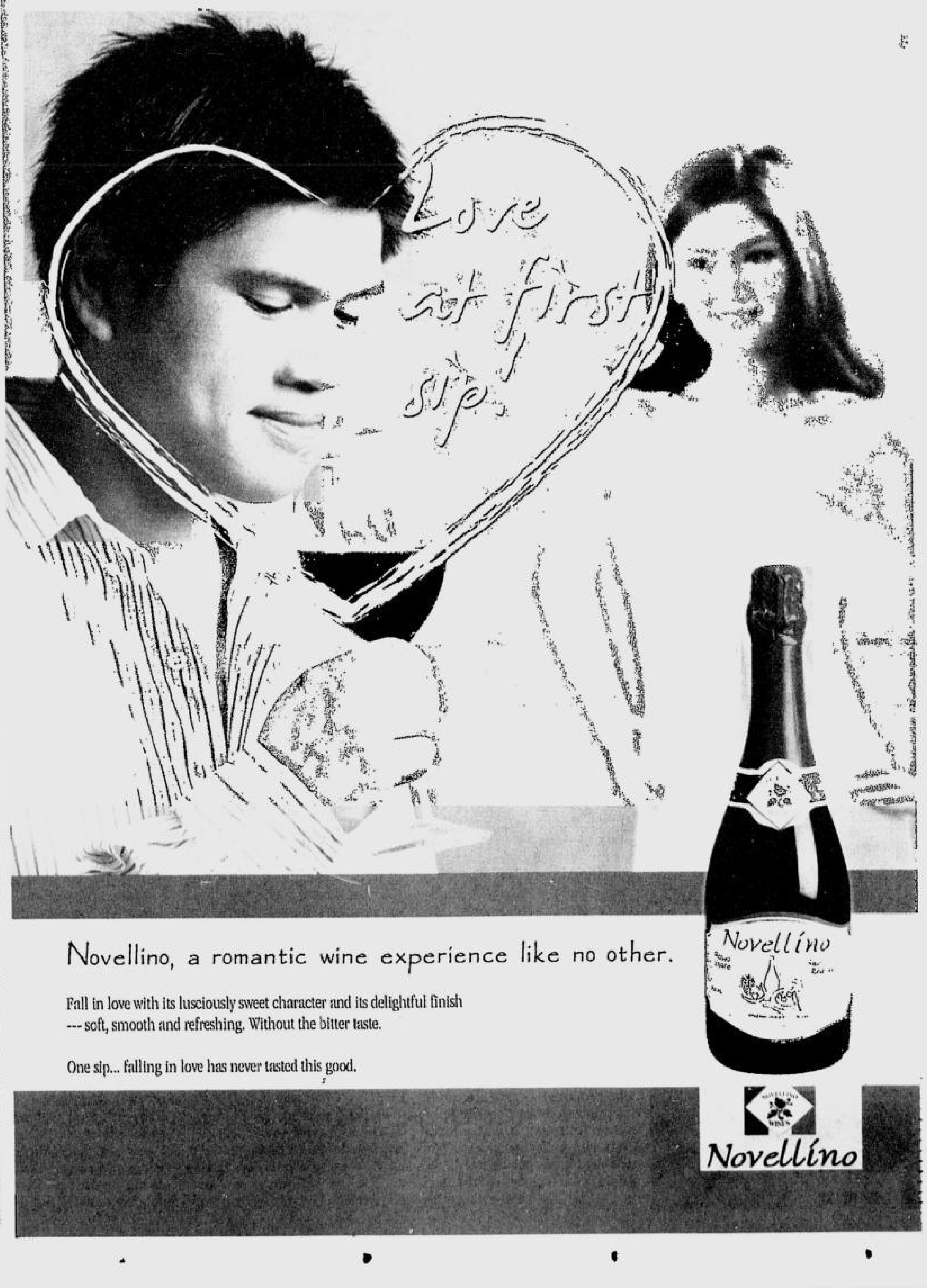
Day at the museum



Admit it, the only time you've been to a museum was back in the fourth grade with your classmates. This time, no one is forcing you to go so you'll have a better chance of enjoying yourself. Plus, you're a little older now, which means you can finally actually appreciate the things you can see in a museum. There are lots of different kinds of museums (and art galleries) that will suit your fancy (art, history, etc.). To find one that will interest you both, you can visit the site of the Museum Volunteers of the Philippines (http://mvphilippines.hypermart.net/index2.htm).

Do good

You and your loved one spend so much time making each other happy. Why not spread the joy to the other people around you? Visit an orphanage, go to an old folks' home, volunteer to build houses for the less fortunate, adopt a stray cat or a little puppy, donate your date money to charity—the possibilities are endless.


Love at first sip.

Novellino, a romantic wine experience like no other.

Fall in love with its lusciously sweet character and its delightful finish
--- soft, smooth and refreshing. Without the bitter taste.

One sip... falling in love has never tasted this good.

Novellino

Dating around th

Pinoy-

Pinoys from different
parts of the world share
their dating secrets

Shy in San Francisco

EARL QUA, 27, SINGLE; works in semiconductors; Filipino-Chinese who left for California when he was 18

How old were you when you started dating? 18

How many serious relationships have you had? 4

Who normally asks who out? And if you do the asking, how do you do it? I usually ask the woman out. I make conversation first and feel my way through.

What kind of guy/girl do you normally date? I normally date girls who are smarter than me.

Where do you normally meet potential dates? Through friends, reunions, family... I'm shy.

How often do you go on dates? Not often at all.

Where do people in your country normally date? What's a typical date? Going to trendy night spots. Doing random things like wall climbing, scuba diving, hiking, day trips to the beach, Napa, etc. Just hanging out in general.

Who pays? I do.

Tell us about your ideal date. Have great conversation in a cozy hole-in-the-wall-type place. After dinner, set up a bonfire by the beach where you can enjoy more good conversation while sipping on red wine.

Have you ever tried dating in the Philippines? How different is it? Not exactly. People are less conscious here (in the US).

Tips for people who want to date in San Francisco. Be yourself. Do what you think you both will enjoy. Make full use of the city. Find a place not many people know about, a place you can call your own and where both of you can be comfortable. Be mindful that you're supposed to be having fun!

Interview by Tammy David

Searching in Switzerland

RICK BUOB, 17; COLLEGE STUDENT IN Switzerland; single; born in Mindoro, grew up in Boracay, lived in Boracay until 14, then moved to Switzerland.

How old were you when you started dating? I started dating at 14 but I had my first girlfriend at 11. I went into the class, I had just moved into the school. Someone said, someone has a crush on you. Thirty minutes later she was my girlfriend. Three months. Phone calls every night, eat together. She was the only Filipina I ever dated. We broke up when I was 12. I was young.

How many serious relationships have you had? I've only been serious with one girl. One girl in Boracay. She's Canadian. It became a long-distance relationship when I moved to Switzerland. Then she moved back to Canada. She was a bad girl. She was three years older.

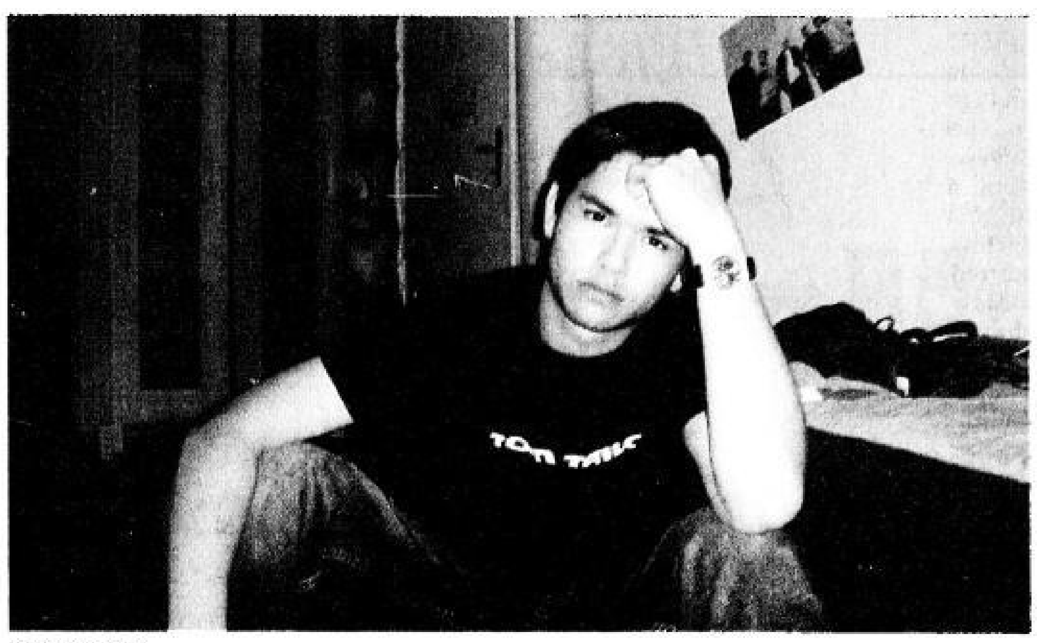
Do girls ask you out or do you ask them out? Girls usually ask me out. And I'm fine with that. It just shows that the girl is actually interested.

What kind of girl do you normally ask out? Older girls. Race or religion doesn't bother me.

How do you ask a girl out? First, I would talk to them and read the body language and if I think they're a little interested, then I ask for digits.

Where do you normally meet them? Usually out, when I'm having fun.

How often do you go on dates? About twice a month.


RICK BUOB

Where do people in your country normally date? What's a typical date? In Switzerland, I usually meet the girl by a lake. Most of the places I've lived in are beside a lake, it's easier to find each other. It's also nice to sit there and just look at the lake. Depending on the time—if it's late at night, it's out for a drink so we can get to know each other more. Usually it's out for dinner. I don't really take them out for a movie because then there's not much talking.

Who pays? Me. Always me. It makes me feel kind of low if the woman pays for me.

Have you ever tried dating in the Philippines? How different is it? The women are more open in Europe. In the Philippines, they giggle a lot. And women in Europe speak their minds.

Tips for people who want to date. Switzerland's full of different races. Don't try too hard. People usually tend to push so much and don't try to show that you're desperate to be with that girl because if she says no, there's always somebody else to ask. Don't walk around asking every girl you see. Try to understand the girl first before you ask her out.

Interview by Pam Pastor

Nice guy in New York

RYAN FERNANDEZ, 22; ART GALLERY assistant, painter, maitre'd; single "and loving it"; "I was born in New York, but grew up in Manila. I came back to NY several years ago for university, and live independently."

How old were you when you started dating? Junior year of high school.

How many serious relationships have you had? One.

How many flings have you had? If by fling you mean like a girl of the month or something... three, maybe four. Fling is such a vague word.

Who normally asks who out? And if you do the asking, how do you do it? Sometimes it takes forever for me to ask someone out because I'm incredibly, undeniably shy. If she's into dinosaurs, I'll mention I'm going to the Museum of Natural History to make fun of the caveman dioramas, and that she's welcome to tag along. If she likes to dance, I'll tell her there's this place by the harbor where a lot of people gather during the summer time and salsa all night outdoors.

What kind of girl do you normally date? I'm drawn to the girl who'd wrap herself around my arm as eagerly as she turns it into a punching bag. So I'm saying extroverted, tomboyish gals. It must be a yin-yang kind of thing.

Where do you normally meet potential dates? Before graduating, school used to be a veritable pond for great catches. I would visit, but I wouldn't want to be some creepy guy hitting on the freshman girls. Being in the restaurant industry, I work with a lot of adorable waitresses, but have yet to test the waters... Sorry, my social life sucks!

How often do you go on dates?

Once, maybe twice a month.

Where do people in your country normally date? What's a typical date? New Yorkers are a varied lot. You can find them in Central Park, having a picnic in the summer, or hurling snowballs at each other during winter. Food-wise, there are so many kinds of cuisine to choose from. Couples can dine at a posh Indian vegetarian restaurant or some French bistro, share a milkshake at a diner, or grab some pepperoni and cheese at the local pizzeria. I won't even start on the club scene. There's just so many ways New Yorkers can have fun.

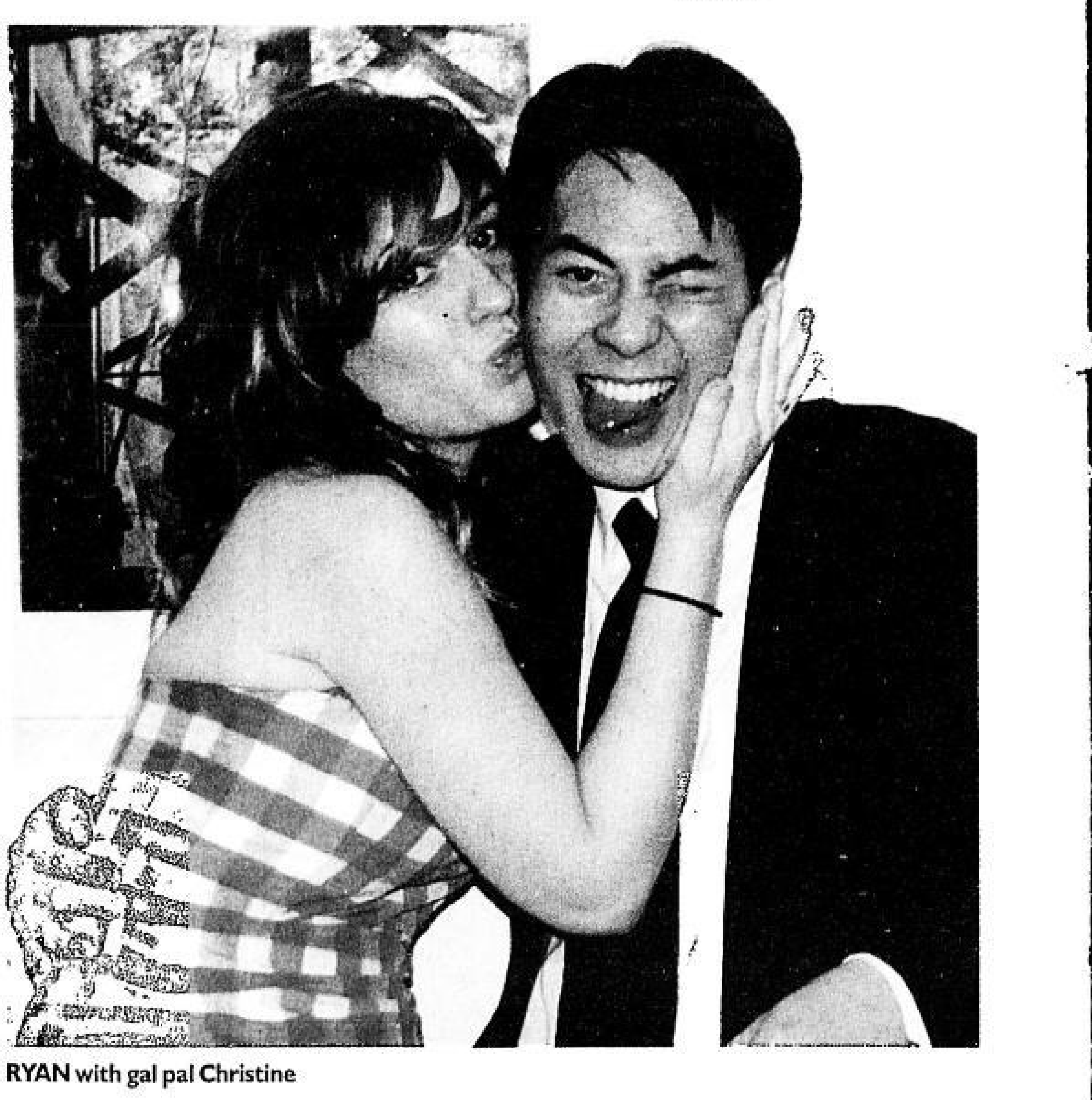
Who pays? It really depends. I've dated girls who insist on paying. Usually, you share the bill, but it's also expected that the guy at least offers to pay.

Tell us about your ideal date. A battle erupts in the middle of Central Park as we hurl large gobs of fresh snow at each other. Whoever surrenders first pays for the hot cocoa that follows. We then go back to my place where I cook pasta or steak or whatever she feels like having. After that sumptuous dinner comes the highlight of the evening... video games. It's either Katamari Damacy or The Sims—I have yet to meet a girl who doesn't love The Sims.

Have you ever tried dating in the Philippines? How different is it? New York and Manila have a lot in common. Both are hectic, fast-paced cities, and the people are not that different either. The girls I've met in Manila can be just as independent, feisty and hilarious as the ones in New York, only they're hiding behind the pretense of being a good girl when at home. I like doing the whole "panliligaw" thing, though.

Tips for people who want to date in New York/USA. Being foreign is usually seen as an attractive thing. A good example is the French accent. Maybe it exudes some kind of mystery about the person. So even if you're first name isn't Pierre and you've never been to Paris, it wouldn't hurt to spice things up with a little Francais here and there, *oui*? See, you're already falling for me.

Interview by Bianca Consunji


RYAN with gal pal Christine

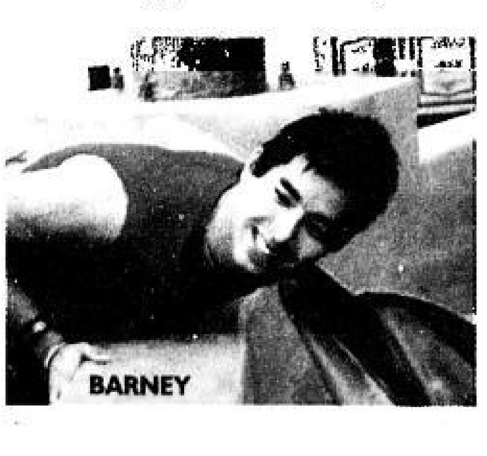
Sweetest things

A rundown of the stunts people have done, all in the name of love

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

NO ONE MAY BE able to build another Taj Mahal to prove his love, but modern-day Romeos (and Juliets) are just as romantic.

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, we asked readers to answer the question, "What's the sweetest thing you've ever done, or the sweetest thing done for you, for love?"


BARNEY

"My then-girlfriend photocopied and compiled all the newspaper headlines which came out on all the birthdays of my life since the day I was born. That meant she had to research and dig up newspapers from the archives of the university library. On another birthday, she prepared a picnic for the two of us near the lagoon in our campus. Suddenly, the university bell tower played 'Happy Birthday.'"

–Jester

"I was always mad at my then-boyfriend for being constantly late for our dates. One day he gave me a short story he wrote himself. It was about a prince who promised to give the sun to his princess. But by the time the prince woke up, it was already evening, so, of course, the sun was no longer out. Instead, the prince got the moon and the stars in the sky and offered it to his princess. And in the story they lived happily ever after. After my boyfriend told me this, I became more forgiving of his tardiness."

–Vanessa, 25, trainer

"It was our sixth-month anniversary. As I was looking for my boyfriend, a guy suddenly came up to me and handed me a single red rose. When I opened the card, my boyfriend had written the first line of our favorite love song on it. Five other guys then gave me a red rose each, one after the other. All five roses came with a card on which my honey had written the lines of our song. After I had received the sixth rose and card, all the six guys started serenading me. Then my boyfriend appeared and wished me "Happy Monthsary."

–Mikee, student, 17

"On my boyfriend's birthday, I arranged an 'educational tour' for us. We went to Manila Zoo, Luneta, National Museum and the Planetarium. We trailed a group of students so we could also hear what the tour guide was saying."

–Amylex, 25

"My girlfriend asked me to put the pieces of a puzzle together. When I finished putting the pieces together, it was a picture of her holding a paper with the words 'I love you' written on it."

–Mark, student, 19

"For his birthday, I gave my boyfriend a small box full of 25 bottles with messages inside. Each message had a reason why I loved him. What made it more special was that I had to travel from my house in Las Piñas to get the idea from my friends in Quezon City, then to Megamall and Mendiola to buy the materials."

–Karen Anne G. Conanan, 25, Software QA engineer

"My girlfriend, who was my coworker, showed me her collection of pictures from our company outings and events. Since she was moving to a new company, I made a scrapbook full of pictures and messages from our colleagues."

HANNA and husband

–José Marciano Patiño, 25, software engineer

"Since we couldn't spend my boyfriend's birthday together, I bought a recipe book, whipped up some chocolate chip cookies, and sent them via courier to his home. He was so touched since I don't know how to cook or bake."

–Jan, student, 20

"After my girlfriend and I broke up, she always talked to me about her new boyfriend. It hurt since I was still in love with her. I endured these for months until she broke up with him and we got back together."

–Barney Lee, 24, corporate banker

"My boyfriend and I are usually forced to spend anniversaries apart. On our first anniversary, I was staying in a hotel for a nationwide conference of students. At around 12 midnight, my boyfriend called me and asked me to open the door, just as I heard some knocking. When I opened it, six delegates to the conference (who went to the same school as my boyfriend) serenaded and greeted me! I was so speechless and very, very red."

–Hanna Fernando-Pacua (just married!), 24, executive assistant

"The best thing my boyfriend has ever done for me was when he told me that he wanted to marry me."

–Czjai, 25

"My then-boyfriend and I had a long-distance relationship. For his 26th birthday, I wired money

Fling-free in Frankfurt

MARK Flora and girlfriend April

MARK FLORA, 23; WORKS IN AN investment house; attached; born and grew up in Frankfurt, but also spent time in the United States. Attached for five years to April, a half-Filipina, half-Spanish girl living in Frankfurt.

How old were you when you started dating? 17.

How many serious relationships have you had? Two, both Filipinas.

How many flings have you had? Too many but that was before my relationship. There was a time when I had different girlfriends from different countries. I was still young, searching for challenges, experiences, I was just enjoying. But I got in trouble and almost lost her and that's when I realized that it's really her I want to be with. I fell down and learned from the mistakes I did.

What kind of girl do you normally date? I've dated European, Americans, Filipinas, mostly mestizas.

Do they ask you out or do you ask them out? Sometimes I ask them out, sometimes they ask me out. I'm picky.

What kind of girl do you normally ask out? I guess you can say I've tried everything, but I really want a Pinay. It really fits.

And do you mind when girls ask you out? It depends on the girl and depends on my mood.

How do you ask a girl out? You look at the interests of the girl, analyze what she's interested in and if she's open for it. You have to try to adapt.

Where do you normally meet them? Parties, just going out.

When you were single, how often did you go on dates? Once every two months.

Now that you're in a relationship, how often do you go with her? We hang out every day. We're serious.

Who pays? My girlfriend and I have been together for a long time already so we take turns. But normally, I always pay. It's a plus.

How are couples in Germany different from couples elsewhere? They really splurge. If it's Valentine's Day, it's real diamonds.

Where do people in your country normally date? Take her out for dinner or lunch, hang out in a park where you can talk or a club.

Tell us about your relationship with your girlfriend. We're serious. I met her in church. She is my first love. You really don't want to lose your first love. I don't want to disappoint her. We fit. I would marry her. If there was a checklist of the perfect girl, she would have a lot of checks. She's the love of my life. Even though I've dated other girls, everything was different with her. I had to make *ligaw*. All the girls before, *walang ligaw*. I had to ask her parents. I went to her house in Frankfurt and asked them.

What was it like to date Europeans? People who grew up here or in the US get spoiled too much. If there's no Filipino culture, they're easy to get. And I don't like that. That's not what I'm looking for.

Tips for people who want to date in Germany. You need a lot of money to date, you need to spend a lot on gifts. Impressions are important. The first impression is more than 50 percent of having a chance with the girl.

Interview by Pam Pastor

DIANA Fauner and boyfriend

Long-distance love in London

DIANA FAUNER, 25; WEBSITE and communications officer for FIA Foundation; attached; half-German, half-Pinoy; born in Germany, grew up and lived in Davao until she was 21, and then moved to the United Kingdom. Boyfriend is a Filipino who was born and raised in Manila and moved to the United States when he was 15.

What's your current relationship setup? How do you cope? I am currently based in London, UK. He's based in Oklahoma, US. There's a six-hour time difference. We see each other about three to four times a year. We've coped by having technology around us. We've used the Internet (chat and e-mail) and we talk on the telephone every day.

How old were you when you started dating? 13. But I started dating my boyfriend when I was 22.

How many serious relationships have you had? Two. They were both long-distance.

What kind of guy/girl do you normally date? Depends. Boyfriend-material guys have to be physically attractive and must be interesting. Someone who has goals and targets in his life. I like the full-packaged guy. Looks, intelligence, personality, career and financial stability.

Where do you normally meet potential dates? The last people I've dated I met on bus stations, train stations and work.

Where do people in your country normally date? What's a typical date? In the UK, a couple would either have dinner and then have drinks, probably share a bottle of wine or something similar. Or, if they do not fancy eating out, they would meet up at the local pub... or go to a bar in the city. And get pissed. And they would end up [in bed]. Hehe.

Who pays? 60 percent men. 30 percent both split it. 10 percent women. But with my boyfriend and me, it depends. He usually pays for everything. I sometimes offer—about 10% of the time.

Have you ever tried dating in the Philippines? How different is it? Yes. It's so much different. Filipinos put you up on a pedestal and basically do everything, and I mean everything for you. They pay for stuff, they drive for you, they clean up after you, they carry your things for you, everything! Here's it's a bit different. He's not gonna walk you to your doorstep (unless he wants to go to bed with) you or if he lives nearby). You usually split bills. They don't offer to carry your things. Sometimes they don't open the door before you. It's very much about women being independent individuals here. So women aren't being spoiled as much as Filipinos spoil their ladies.

Interviewed by Vanessa Doctor

e world,

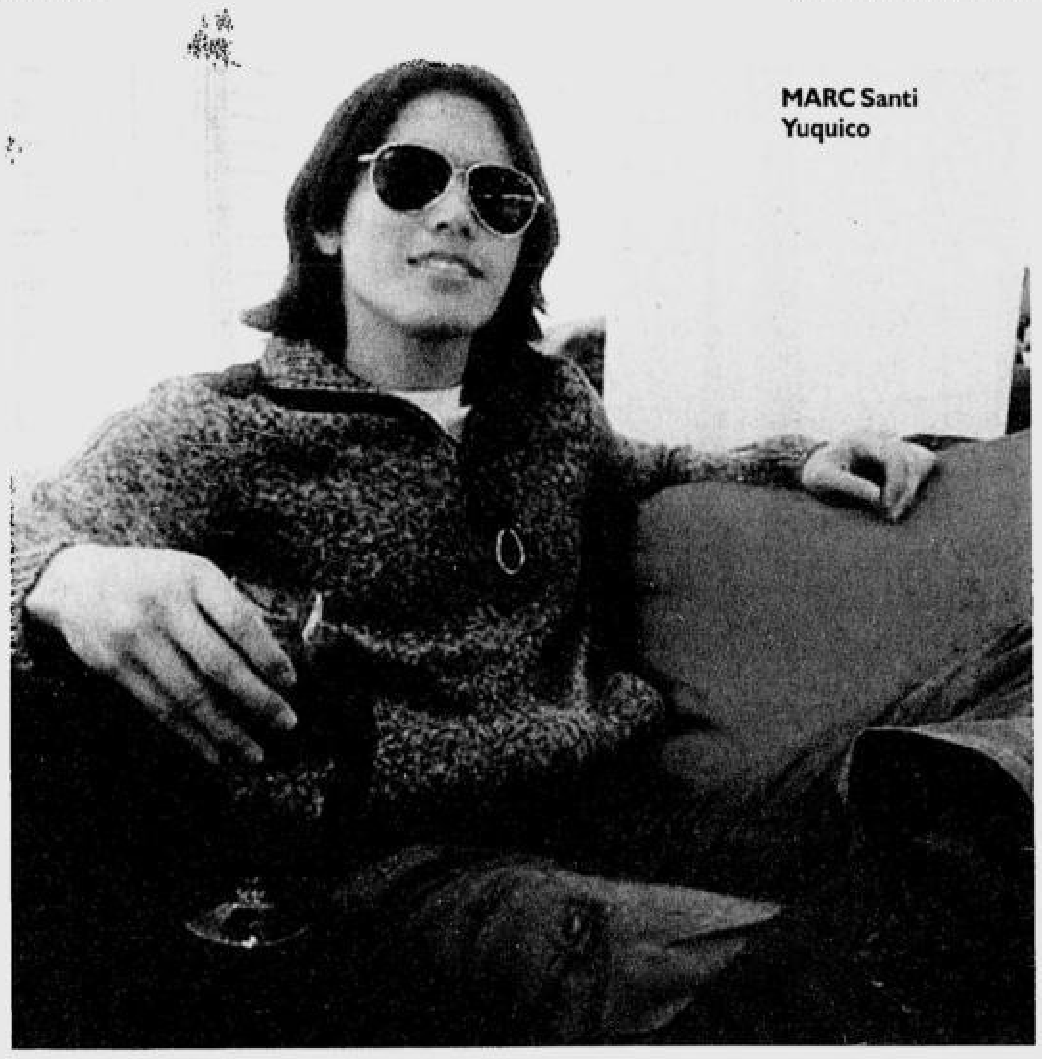
style

WE ALL KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE to date in this country. But how are Pinoys faring in other parts of the world?

We snooped around and made some gutsy Pinoys spill their deepest dating secrets.

Read about them. And if you feel like sharing your stories too, you can. *(See sidebar for details.)*

Confident in Canada



MARC Santi Yuquico

MARC SANTI YUQUICO, 22; student at University of Toronto (double-major in Economics and East Asian Studies, minor in Environmental Economics; single; of Chinese-Filipino background who was born and raised in Manila, and who moved to Toronto, Canada when he was 18.

How old were you when you started dating? 12.

How many serious relationships have you had? One.

How many flings have you had? I don't keep track.

Who normally asks who out? And if you do the asking, how do you do it? Either, it depends on the situation. A lot of girls are not afraid to ask guys out.

What kind of girl do you normally date? Definitely ones who have respect for themselves and who I'm attracted to physically and more importantly, mentally.

Where do you normally meet potential dates? Through friends, school, work, parties.

How often do you go on dates? Depends on the season.

Where do people in your country normally date? What's a typical date? It depends, if it's still on the "getting-to-know" stage then a coffee shop would be adequate. Once you find you're "into" the person, then you might want to start to "invest."

Who pays? At first, me. She could help out later on if she wants to.

Tell us about your ideal date. A nice dinner and a place where you could just let loose and be comfortable enough to get to know each other without being wary about what others might think or say. The ideal date person is someone who's just a ton of fun and who's just herself. Someone who I can relate to comfortably in many ways. Confidence is key, not self-conceitedness.

Have you ever tried dating in the Philippines? How different is it? Most of the girls that I've encountered are more cautious and are generally more *pakipot* in various aspects—which, at times, can be a good thing.

Tips for people who want to date in Canada. Learn how to snowboard and just be yourself, that's the only way you'll find someone that you'll be content with in the long-run.

Interview by Tammy David

Tell us about your love life

Name
Age
Occupation/School/Course
Status
Quick background
How old were you when you started dating?
How many serious relationships have you had?
How many flings have you had?
Who normally asks who out? And if you do the asking, how do you do it?
What kind of guy/girl do you normally date?
Where do you normally meet potential dates?
How often do you go on dates?
Where do people in your location normally date? What's a typical date?
Who pays?
Tell us about your ideal date
Tips for people who want to date in your location

E-mail your answers to 2bu@inquirer.com.ph

to his best friend's bank account so his best friend could buy 26 balloons and my boyfriend's favorite food. I then asked his best friend to give the balloons and the food to my guy's brother, who then placed them in my guy's room. They were the first things he saw when he woke up on his birthday."

–Lorybeth, student

"After I took the bar exams, my boyfriend surprised me with a week-long vacation in Boracay. He made sure that we were booked in the best hotel and that we had meals at the nicest restaurants. He paid for everything, including tricycle fare."

–Meemo, 28, employee

"I once mentioned to my girl that I was reading the book version of my favorite movie. One Christmas, she gifted me with a CD of the movie's soundtrack."

–Hans, student, 15

"I took a girl to the cadet hop. Though it was just a dinner-dance, few girls have ever experienced going to a cadet hop, so that makes it the sweetest."

–Bortre, 25, student

"I once told a guy that my favorite morning habit was to read the day's newspaper. But since there was always a queue to read the library copy, there were issues which I could not read. Early the next morning, he showed up at my dorm and gave me my own copy of that day's paper. He did that for seven days until his allowance ran out."

–Inna, student, 18

"My boyfriend hates waking up early, but he has to leave his house at 7 a.m. for class. One morning, I bought all the daily newspapers, picked up breakfast for takeout, and drove to his house. I put everything in a big shopping bag and showed up at his door at 6:30 am. He told me that he had never woken up to a better morning."

–Trish, student, 19

KAREN

"A friend euphemistically told me that I had a 'unique sense of fashion.' I whined about this to my boyfriend all evening. The next day, he bought me fashion magazines so I could update myself on the latest styles."

–Faye, 25, researcher

"My dream girl agreed to be my girlfriend."

–Leo, 26, student

"When I moved from Los Baños to Cebu, and then to Manila, my guy also relocated to these places just to follow me."

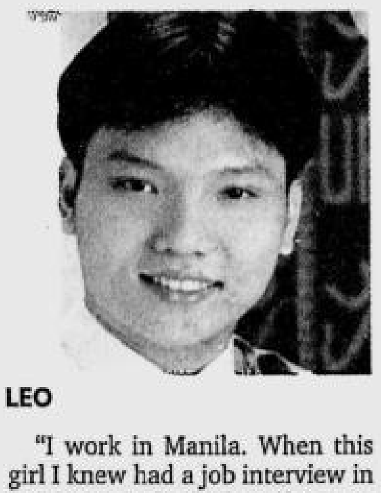
–Ellen, 23, climate change lobbyist

"On my way home from work, I saw my girlfriend riding a jeep on her way to see me. I called her name but she couldn't hear me. I just ran after the jeep until I caught up. She then kissed me while all the jeep passengers were staring at us."

–David Espino, 26, computer teacher

"Back in college, I was so addicted to this chocolate drink variant available only from vendo machines. When my boyfriend learned about this, he researched on where he could buy the same variant. He went all the way to the factory and begged them to sell him a pack of it. They eventually gave in to his persistence."

–Mon, 27



LEO

"I work in Manila. When this girl I knew had a job interview in Baguio, I took the long bus trip with her. When we got there, it turned out that it wasn't just a final interview, but it was already the start of her week-long training. I took the bus back to Manila and packed a week's worth of clothes for her. The minute I reached Baguio, I handed the clothes to her and then took the bus again back to Manila. All in all, I spent about 24 hours riding the Manila-Baguio bus back and forth."

–Lynx

"When my boyfriend got mad at me, I delivered a card and a cake, both with 'I'm sorry' on them, to his office."

–Yen, 27, marketing supervisor

"A guy offered to drive me home. Since he wasn't my boyfriend yet, I refused. Instead, he just followed the bus I was riding, along the whole stretch of Edsa. When the bus stopped at the Ayala intersection, he called me on my mobile and asked me to look outside the bus window. When I looked out, he was peering out of his car window while saying "I love you" over the phone. He told me that he wanted to see my face when he said those words."

–Meg, 18, student

"I defied convention by loving a person of the same sex."

–Cracker Jack, 25

Lovable eyewear

THIS SEASON OF love, gift your loved ones chic and trendy eyewear from Flywear. Surprise them with colors that are eye-catching such as emerald green, electric blue, white and orange—in aviator shapes and '60s Mod styles.

Image model Isabel Oli (in photos) is captured in various moods wearing the latest collection from Flywear. This Valentine's, get a free huggable pillow for every P300 worth of purchase in all Flywear kiosks at all SM Malls, 50th Avenue at Robinsons Galleria, Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall and Festival Mall.

The winning couple among 2bU! readers this Valentine's will win P1,000 worth of gift certificates.

Delicious lovely ceremony

THIS MONTH OF LOVE, there is one thing that all women want. It is rich, dark and smooth. No, not a man, but chocolate.

Max Brenner Chocolate Bar invites couples to celebrate a uniquely romantic experience, the ultimate Melting Kiss Ceremony.

The ceremony will use the secret chocolate egg, Magnet, especially created by Max Brenner's.

Magnet is a chocolate egg which must be moved from mouth to mouth until the chocolate melts. Then something miraculous happens. A secret and intense magical feeling magnetizes the kissing couple.

Only those who take part in the kissing session will understand.

Special Valentine prizes will be awarded the winning couples.

Fondues

Max Brenner's warm chocolate fondues have become legendary. Dipping choices include chunks of seasonal fruits, lady fingers, marshmallows and cheddar cheese. There's also a wide selection of ground peanut, coconut dips and *pinipig*.

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Max Brenner Chocolate Bar also offers affordable and personalized hamper packages.

Max Brenner Chocolate Bar is at G/F, Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 7288801.

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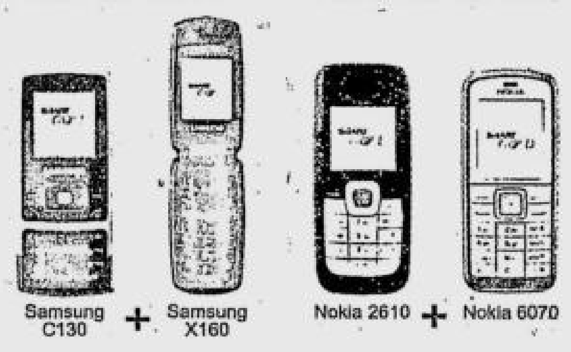

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Nokia 6070 & Nokia 6070	₱6,700	₱3,700
Nokia 2610 & Nokia 6070	₱5,500	₱2,500

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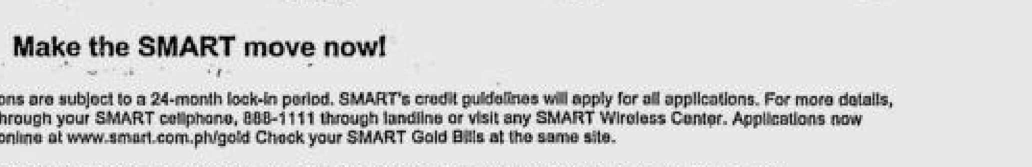

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See flyers for details. Promo runs from Feb. 10 to Mar. 31, 2007. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0585, Series of 2007

Win love bracelets

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Check out www.RegaloService.com and get access to different kinds of flowers (a dozen red or pink Holland roses in terra cotta, a dozen lovely long-stemmed red roses in a rustic basket, or a classic bouquet of roses in *sinamay*), chocolates and balloons.

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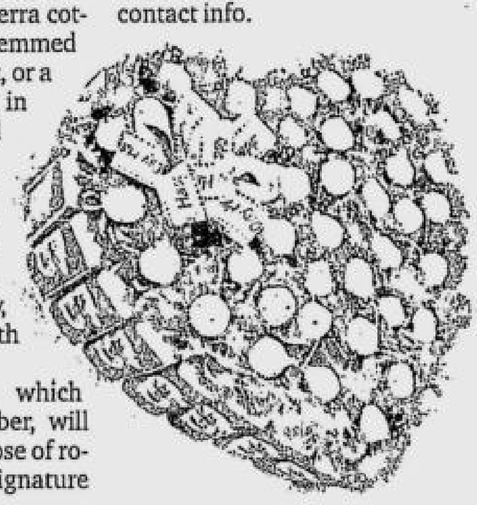
RegaloService.com, which was launched last October, will give your gifts an extra dose of romance with its special signature packaging service.

In the spirit of this special day, RegaloService.com will be giving away his-and-hers bracelets from Blandiore.

Tell us why you and your loved one deserve to win the bracelets. Send your entries to ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph along with your name, age, school/office and contact info.



Inspirational book

A GOOD VALENTINE'S GIFT idea is an inspirational book.

Fr. Juni Jesena, SJ, has written a beautiful book in Visayan for humble people about our humble God titled "The Beggar-God," or in Visayan "Yayee III—Ang Bulingit Nga Diyos." It's a most inspiring book of real, touching, healing, forgiving, inspiring, transforming modern-day parables.

Give this book as your special Valentine's gift to your *yaya*, housemaid or family driver; to your *lola*, relatives and friends in the Visayas and Mindanao.

"Yayee..." is now available for only P280 at the Ateneo de Manila University and other selected bookstores nationwide. Call 4265971, 4265941 or 4262915.

ENTERTAINMENT

Website: entertainment

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) **or email us at** pr_e

KYLIE Minogue and Olivier Martinez AP

A true love story

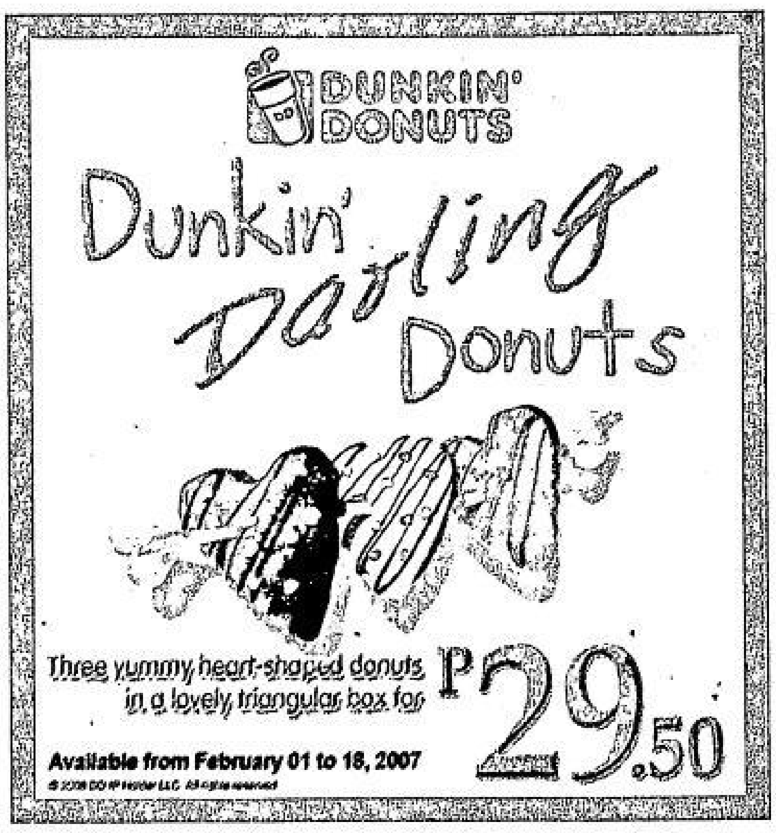
SYDNEY—AUSTRALIAN SINGER KYLIE Minogue is urging fans not to harass her ex-boyfriend, French actor Olivier Martinez.

"For someone whom I have enormous love and respect for, and communicate with, it is so grossly unfair: to demonize an honest man," Minogue said in a statement on her website (www.kylie.com).

Minogue and Martinez ended their four-year relationship last week but said they would remain friends. Tabloid newspapers ran stories of Martinez's alleged infidelity with actresses Penelope Cruz and Michelle Rodriguez.

"The treatment Olivier has received of late ... he simply does not deserve," Minogue said in the statement posted on Friday. She praised her ex for supporting her while she underwent chemotherapy in France after she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2005.

"He didn't hesitate in ... putting projects on hold so he could be with me. He's the most honorable man I have ever met," she said. *Reuters*



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HEART EVANGELISTA JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Heart: I was a Jessica Simpson in the making

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

SAYS HEART EVANGELISTA of the different projects lined up for her by ABS-CBN: "It's a Christmas-birthday-Valentine gift rolled into one."

That's probably because she is celebrating her birthday today.

Accompanied by her Genesis managers Angeli Pangilinan and Gina Martinez, she met with ABS-CBN executives Cory Vidanes and Malou Santos last week.

Genesis told INQUIRER Entertainment that Heart is working on a *sineserye* (a soap opera based on a movie) this month and a variety show in April, and movies with Star Cinema.

Alma mater

According to the grapevine, she is headlining a remake of the 1992 Viva movie "Hiram na Mukha," which starred Nanette Medved as a deformed woman who became beautiful with the help of an insane plastic surgeon.

"It's challenging, heavy drama," she says.

It's a comeback of sorts for Heart, who's been shrugging off rumors that she's leaving the *Kapamilya* for the *Kapuso* network. (Actually, she hosted ABC 5's "I Love Philippine Idol" while she was away from ABS-CBN.)

"I'm happy to be back home. This was my school, my alma mater. This was where I grew up. If I had a choice, I'd rather stay," she says.

She admits that the "break" did her a world of good. "I've realized a lot of things. Everything was happening at the same time," she recounts, referring to the slew of intrigues that she had to overcome.

"I didn't appreciate my blessings. While I was away, I had the chance to reflect. I've become less 'show biz.' I'm more grounded now. I've aged 10 years in that two-year span," she explains.

Very sheltered

She admits that she was a "20-year-old with the mind of a 16-year-old" then.

"I was a Jessica Simpson in the making," she notes. "I didn't know how to cross the street. I thought you pay your Meralco bill at the Meralco Theater! I was very sheltered."

In the "growing-up" department, boyfriend Jericho Rosales was a big help.

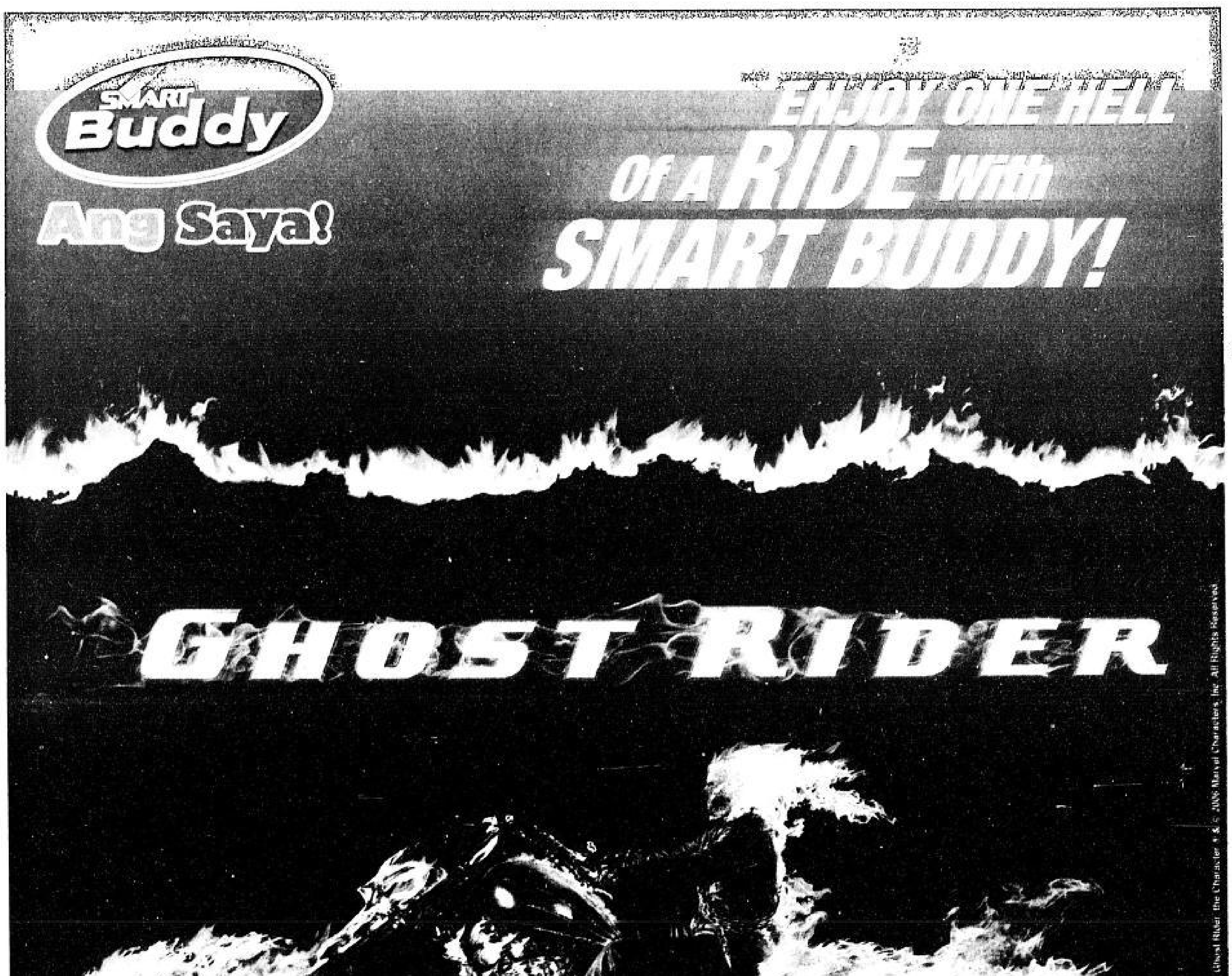
"He's a good influence on me; he's very independent," Heart says of Echo.

She also shares with Echo a love for music.

Speaking of "independent" projects, Heart is producing her own CD, which will be released locally and in Australia. "My single 'Tell Me' reached no. 18 in Australia's Top 50 charts," she says.

Along with Maria Isabel Lopez, Jao Mapa and John Arcilla, she topbills the indie film "Ay Ayeng," directed by Ed Palmos. "It will be screened in Hawaii and Berlin."

She plays Ayeng, an Ifugao school teacher struggling against militarization during the Marcos era.



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1 3 4

PIC MESSAGES
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1 3 5

ANIMATED WALLPAPERS
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1 3 5

DAHIL SMART TAYO

Marvel, Ghost Rider the character, Mephistopheles, Blackheart, Wallow, Gressil, Abigor, Rachael Simpson TM & © 2007 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. www.marvel.com Ghost Rider, Motion Picture Artwork Copyright 2007 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

P2.50/text; P15/soundclip; P30/truetone*; P50/game; P15/MMS Wallpapers/Animated Wallpapers/Pic Messages. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4964, Series of 2007.

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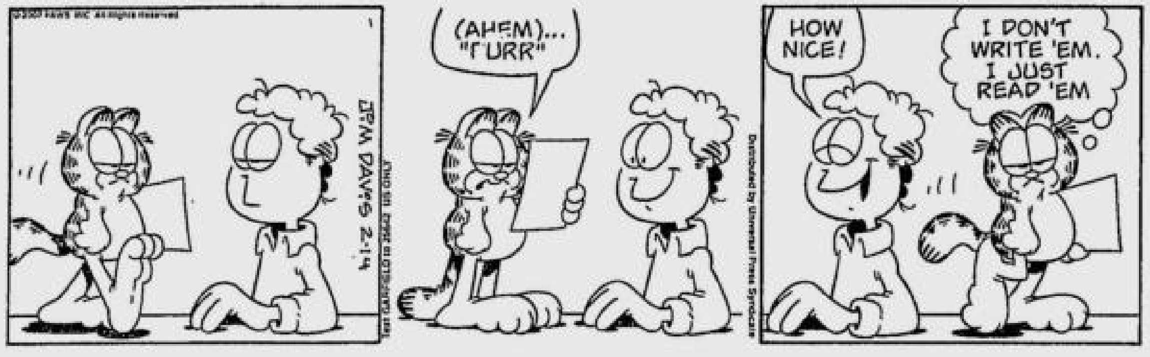
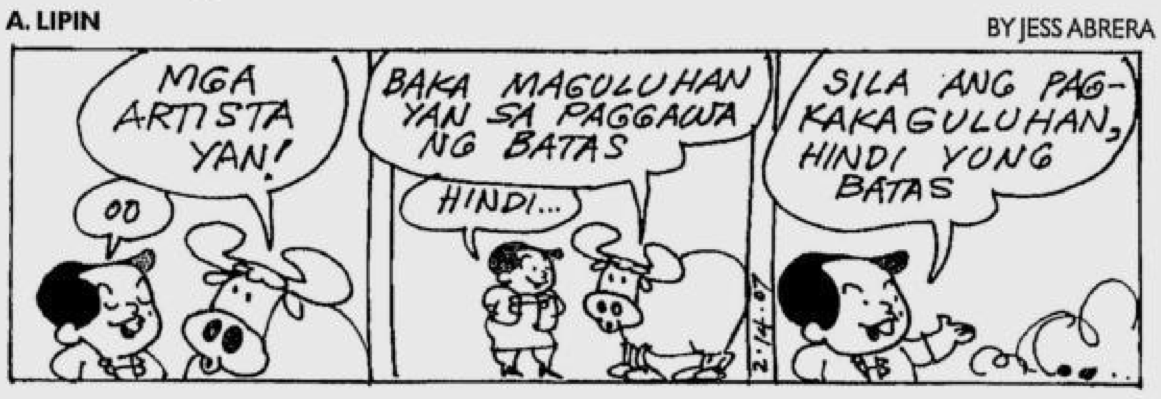
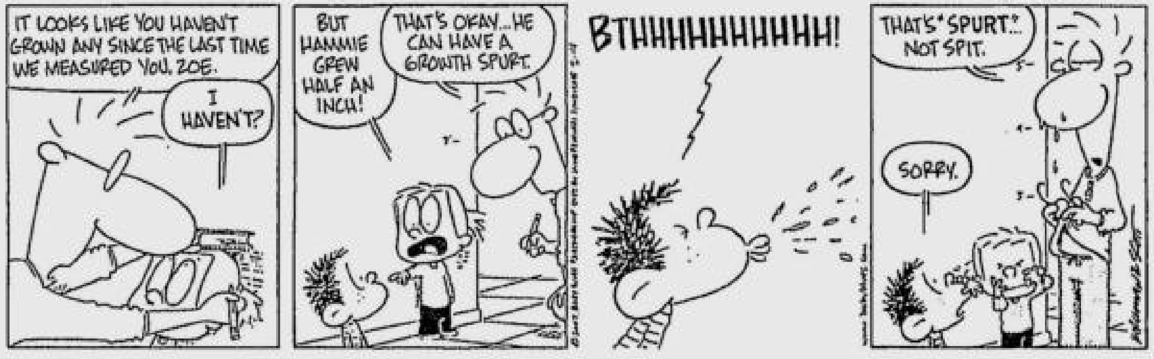
GARFIELD
BY JIM DAVIS



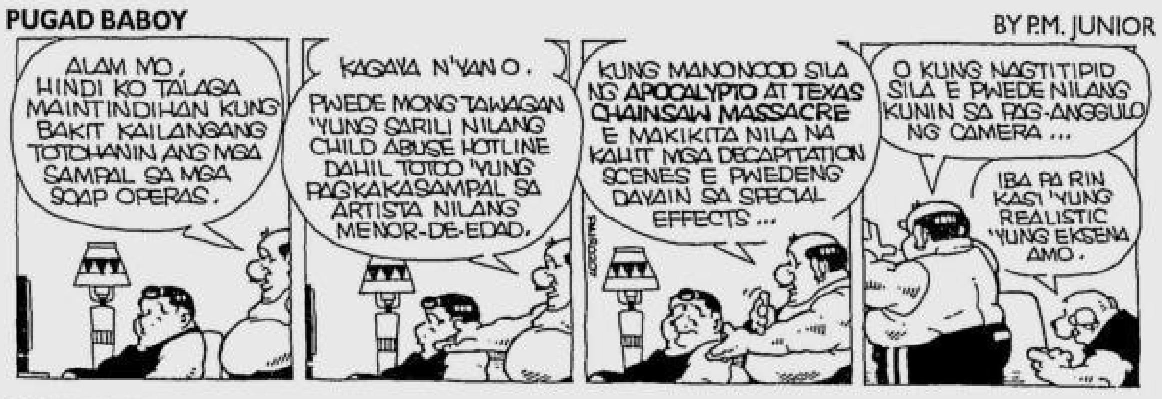
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


MGA ARTISTA YAN!
OO
BAKA MAGULUHAN YAN SA PAGGAWA NG BATAS
HINDI...
SILA ANG PAG-KAKAGULUHAN, HINDI YUNG BATAS
2.14.07

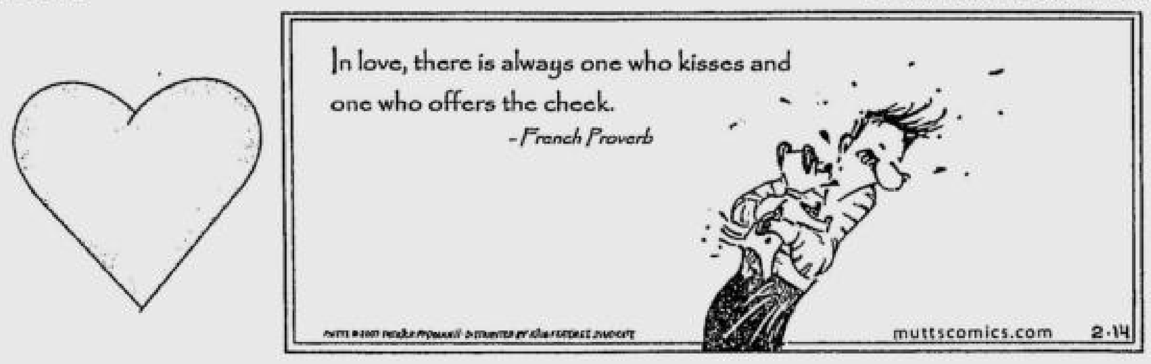
BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


IT LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVEN'T GROWN ANY SINCE THE LAST TIME WE MEASURED YOU, ZOE.
I HAVEN'T?
BUT HAMMIE GREW HALF AN INCH!
THAT'S OKAY...HE CAN HAVE A GROWTH SPURT.
BTHHHHHHHHHH!
THAT'S "SPURT." NOT SPIT.
SORRY.

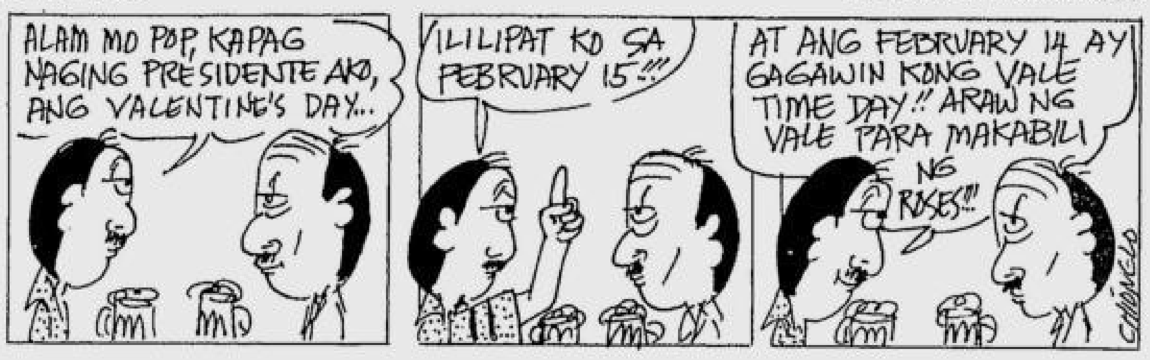
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM MO, HINDI KO TALAGA MAINTINDIHAN KUNG BAKIT KAILANGANG TOTOHANIN ANG MGA SAMPAL SA MGA SOAP OPERAS.
KAGAYA N'YAN O. PWEDE MONG TAWAGAN 'YUNG SARILI NILANG CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE DAHIL TOTOO 'YUNG PAGKAKASAMPAL SA ARTISTA NILANG MENOR-DE-EDAD.
KUNG MANONOOD SILA NG APOCALYPTO AT TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE E MAKIKITA NILA NA KAHIT MGA DECAPITATION SCENES E PWEDENG DAYAIN SA SPECIAL EFFECTS...
O KUNG NAGTITIPID SILA E PWEDE NILANG KUNIN SA PAG-ANGGULO NG CAMERA...
IBA PA RIN KASI 'YUNG REALISTIC 'YUNG EKSENA AMO.

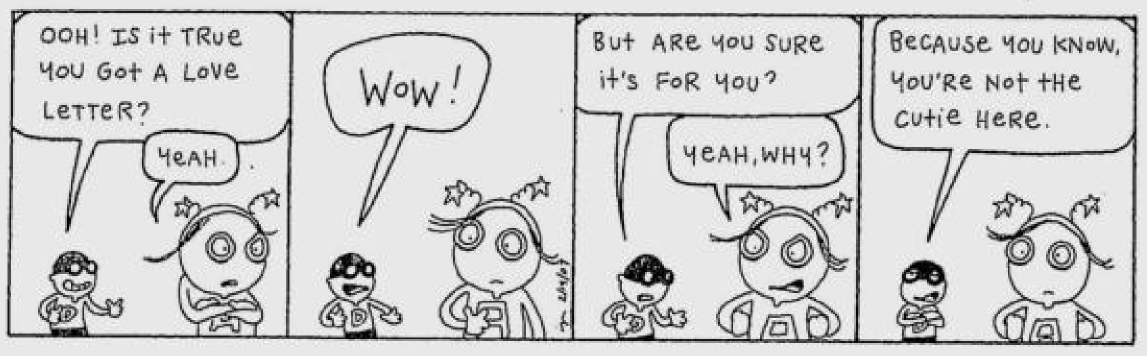
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


In love, there is always one who kisses and one who offers the cheek.
- French Proverb
muttscomics.com
2.14

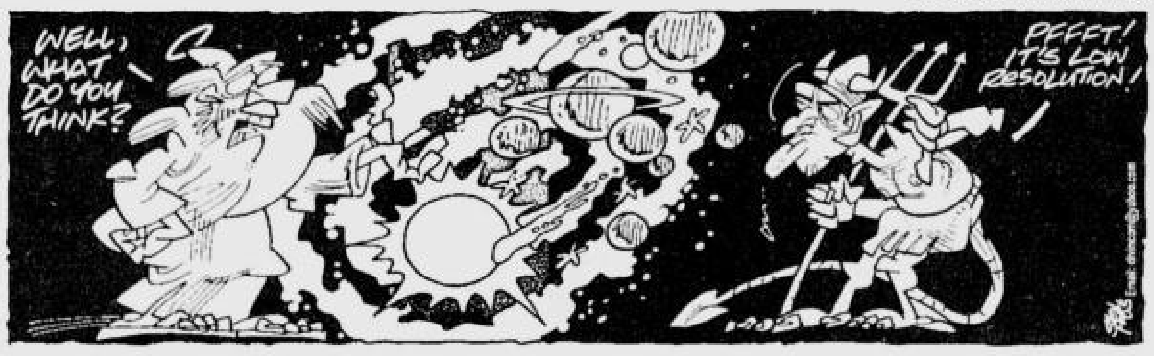
LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ALAM MO POP, KAPAG NAGING PRESIDENTE AKO, ANG VALENTINE'S DAY...
ILILIPAT KO SA FEBRUARY 15!!!
AT ANG FEBRUARY 14 AY GAGAWIN KONG VALE TIME DAY!! ARAW NG VALE PARA MAKABILI NG ROSES!!!
CHIONGLO

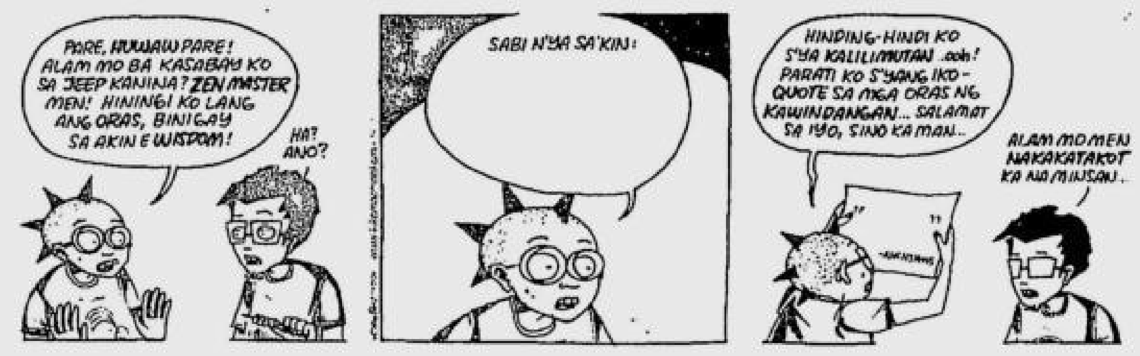
ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


OOH! IS it TRue You Got A Love LetteR?
YeAH.
WoW!
But ARe You SuRe it's FoR You?
YeAH, WHY?
Because You Know, You're Not the cutie Here.

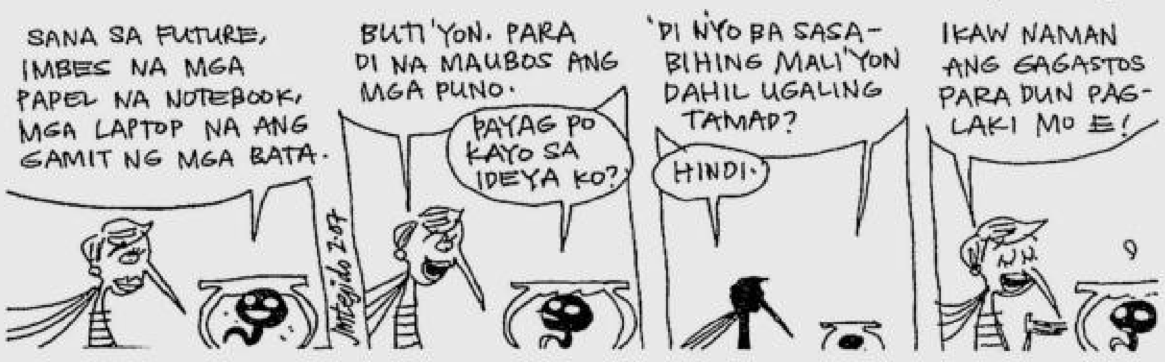
DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
PFFFT! IT'S LOW RESOLUTION!

KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


PARE, HUWAW PARE! ALAM MO BA KASABAY KO SA JEEP KANINA? ZEN MASTER MEN! HININGI KO LANG ANG ORAS, BINIGAY SA AKIN E WISDOM!
HA? ANO?
SABI N'YA SA'KIN:
HINDING-HINDI KO S'YA KALILIMUTAN ..ooh! PARATI KO S'YANG IKO-QUOTE SA MGA ORAS NG KAWINDANGAN... SALAMAT SA IYO, SINO KA MAN...
ALAM MO MEN NAKAKATAKOT KA NAMINSAN..

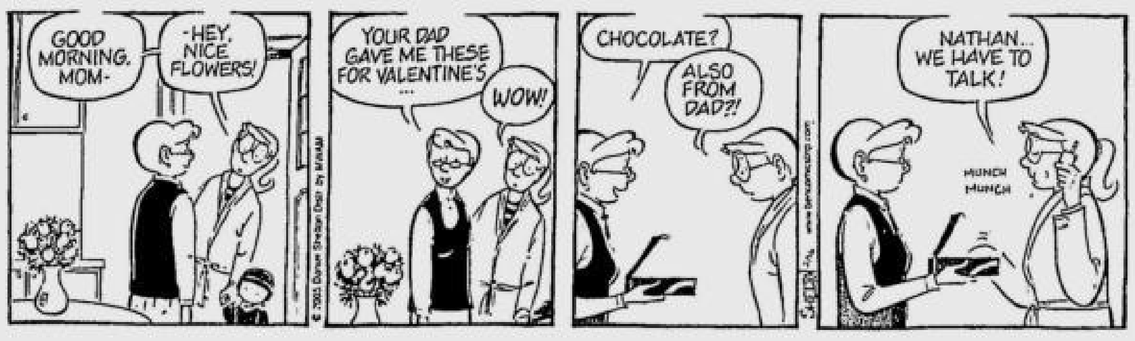
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SANA SA FUTURE, IMBES NA MGA PAPEL NA NOTEBOOK, MGA LAPTOP NA ANG GAMIT NG MGA BATA.
BUTI 'YON. PARA DI NA MAUBOS ANG MGA PUNO.
PAYAG PO KAYO SA IDEYA KO?
'DI N'YO BA SASABIHING MALI 'YON DAHIL UGALING TAMAD?
HINDI.
IKAW NAMAN ANG GAGASTOS PARA DUN PAGLAKI MO E!
Jmtejido 2.07

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

ANONG GAGAWIN NATIN NGAYON?
WE WILL PAINT THE TOWN RED... IT'S VALENTINE!!!

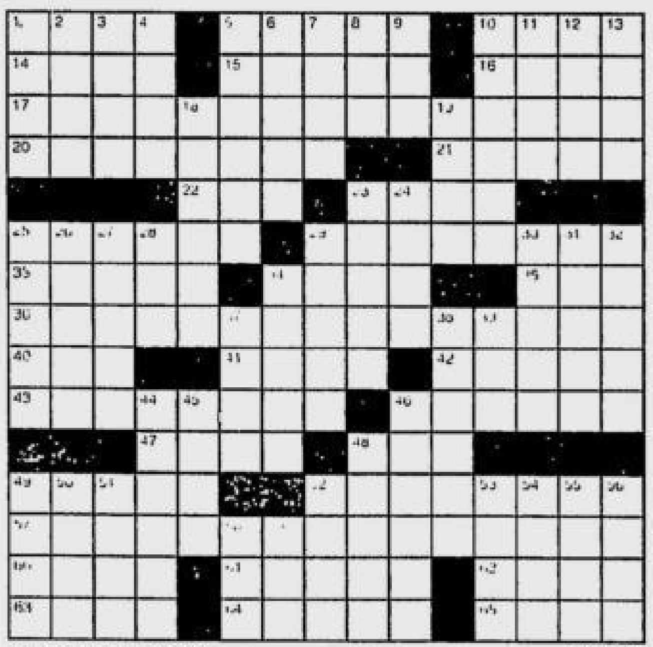
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


GOOD MORNING, MOM-
-HEY, NICE FLOWERS!
YOUR DAD GAVE ME THESE FOR VALENTINE'S ...
WOW!
CHOCOLATE?
ALSO FROM DAD?!
NATHAN... WE HAVE TO TALK!
MUNCH MUNCH

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Friendly
5 Fellows
10 Server's handout
14 Think piece?
15 Indian ruler
16 Nuptial vows
17 An attentive suitor...
20 Undertaking
21 Web-footed mammal
22 Shortened sweeper
23 Except
25 Repeat by rote
29 Less familiar
33 Secret love affair
34 Stupefy
35 NFL-er Manning
36 An attentive suitor...
40 Birthday topic
41 Chain unit
42 __ and well
43 Rocket top
46 Sheen
47 Plebiscite
48 Period of many years
49 Thin layer
52 Semiformal
57 An attentive suitor...
60 Greasy
61 Sales spiel
62 Guitarist Clapton
63 Tiny feathered friend
64 Ornamental rock
65 Swank

DOWN
1 Like Solomon
2 Yemen port
3 Tear apart
4 Fabricated
5 Tie alternative
6 Complete confusion
7 Cracked somewhat
8 Chum
9 That girl
10 Hand warmer
11 Polish prose
12 __ of the above
13 PC operator
18 Relishes
19 Classic Chevy model
23 Aground
24 Pisa's river
25 Heathen
26 South-of-the-border sidekick
27 Leads a nomadic life
28 Wish undone
29 "Platoon" director
30 Jokester's query
31 Ecole attendee
32 Step component
34 Distinguish oneself
37 Congeal
38 NASA event
39 Unser Sr. and Jr. of auto racing
44 Writer Waugh
45 Bivouac beds
46 Can't stand
48 Put into office
49 Flat-bottomed boat
50 '60s musical
51 Glamour competition
52 Old VHS competition
53 Castle stronghold
54 Poi source
55 Place for a pupil
56 Imprint clearly
58 Public hot spring
59 Hair purchase



By Linda Bushman
Chicago, IL
2/14/07

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

B	A	I	T	S	■	H	A	N	D	■	A	I	R	S
A	L	G	A	E	■	A	M	O	R	■	A	R	I	A
T	O	O	K	A	P	H	O	T	O	G	R	A	P	H
H	E	R	E	■	O	A	K	■	O	R	D	E	A	L
■	■	■	I	D	S	■	■	O	L	A	V	■	■	■
B	L	U	N	D	E	R	B	U	S	S	A	M	M	O
R	A	N	■	T	R	O	U	T	■	P	R	I	E	R
I	N	T	L	■	S	T	Y	L	E	■	K	A	L	I
A	D	I	O	S	■	T	E	A	R	S	■	M	O	N
N	O	I	O	N	G	E	R	W	O	R	K	I	N	G
■	■	■	K	O	A	N	■	■	I	I	I	■	■	■
S	C	H	O	O	L	■	A	B	C	■	N	Y	S	E
L	A	Y	U	P	O	R	S	L	A	M	D	U	N	K
A	P	P	T	■	S	O	H	O	■	O	L	L	I	E
B	E	E	S	■	H	O	Y	T	■	P	E	E	P	S

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2/14/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You approach life in a very physical way. You're entertaining, witty and fascinating. Others love to be in your company. You have a quick mind and a clever wit. (Many of you love pranks and practical jokes.) You're highly independent and not afraid to make your own rules. In the year ahead, you'll learn or study something very important. **Birthdate of:** Pat O'Brien, TV host; Enrico Colantoni, actor; Rob Thomas, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You seem to be hung up on old business now, because stuff from the past keeps haunting you. This is just Mercury in retrograde playing with your mind. Relax.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Past acquaintances and old friends you haven't heard from in a while are back in your face again. Reconnect wherever you can. It's good to have history with others.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Expect to run into old bosses or matters connected with previous jobs. You might have a second offer from somewhere you've applied before. It's also a good time to rehash old business with parents.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Delays in matters related to publishing, the media, travel and dealing with foreign countries are likely now. However, you can also resolve old problems in the same areas.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Checks are late in the mail. Matters connected with inheritances, insurance and shared property seem to be hung up for the moment. This will be resolved in a few weeks.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're dealing with partners and people from your past now. Remain confident. (Living well is the best revenge.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Be patient with delays, snafus and mixed communications at work. Although your efficiency is down right now because of these errors, you could also wrap up a lot of old business.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Many of you are running into old flames now. (You're definitely a sign who has a past.) You will more easily achieve a resolution about the care and education of children in the next few weeks.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Relatives might be camped on your doorstep right now. Stock the fridge. This is a good time to rehash old family issues and get to the bottom of something.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Pay your phone bill. Stay on top of car repairs. Retrograde Mercury will definitely bring glitches and delays to your daily routine.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Money and cash-flow issues seem to be bogged down. If you can, delay starting a new job until March 8.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Mercury is now retrograde in your sign until March 8. Many things in your daily routine will be delayed. Lost keys, misplaced papers and silly confusion in communications will dog your steps.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		4				5		
2			6		3			4
	7		4	1	2		3	
		7				6		
3		6				7		5
	4	1				8	9	
		2				3		
	5		8	3	7		1	
	1						5	

Difficulty Level ★★★
2/14

Answer to previous puzzle

7	2	4	5	3	9	1	6	8
8	9	5	2	1	6	7	4	3
6	3	1	7	4	8	2	9	5
9	4	3	8	5	2	6	1	7
2	6	7	3	9	1	5	8	4
1	5	8	6	7	4	3	2	9
5	1	2	4	8	7	9	3	6
4	7	6	9	2	3	8	5	1
3	8	9	1	6	5	4	7	2

Difficulty Level ★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

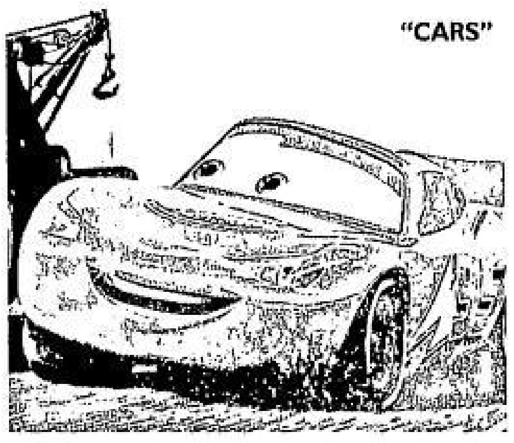
'Cars' is top animated film

GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA—A COCKY RACE CAR THAT LEARNS THE wisdom of slowing down won the race for Best Animated Feature at the 34th annual Annie Awards, honoring achievements in feature film and television animation.

"Cars," from The Walt Disney Co. and Pixar Animation Studios, on Sunday defeated contenders that included "Happy Feet" from Warner Bros., "Over the Hedge," from DreamWorks Animation SKG Inc., "Monster House" from Sony Pictures, a division of Sony Corp., and "Open Season," also from Sony Pictures.

The Annie Awards are presented by The International Animated Film Society. The winner has gone on to claim the Oscar for animated feature every year since the Academy Award for animation was created.

Three films are contending for the animated feature Oscar on Feb. 25, including "Cars," "Monster House" and "Happy Feet." *AP*


"CARS"

NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS AND UP

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF HERO AND THE PRODUCER OF FEARLESS
CHOW YUN FAT
GONG LI
LOYALTY CAN DIVIDE
PASSION CAN DECEIVE
POWER CAN DESTROY
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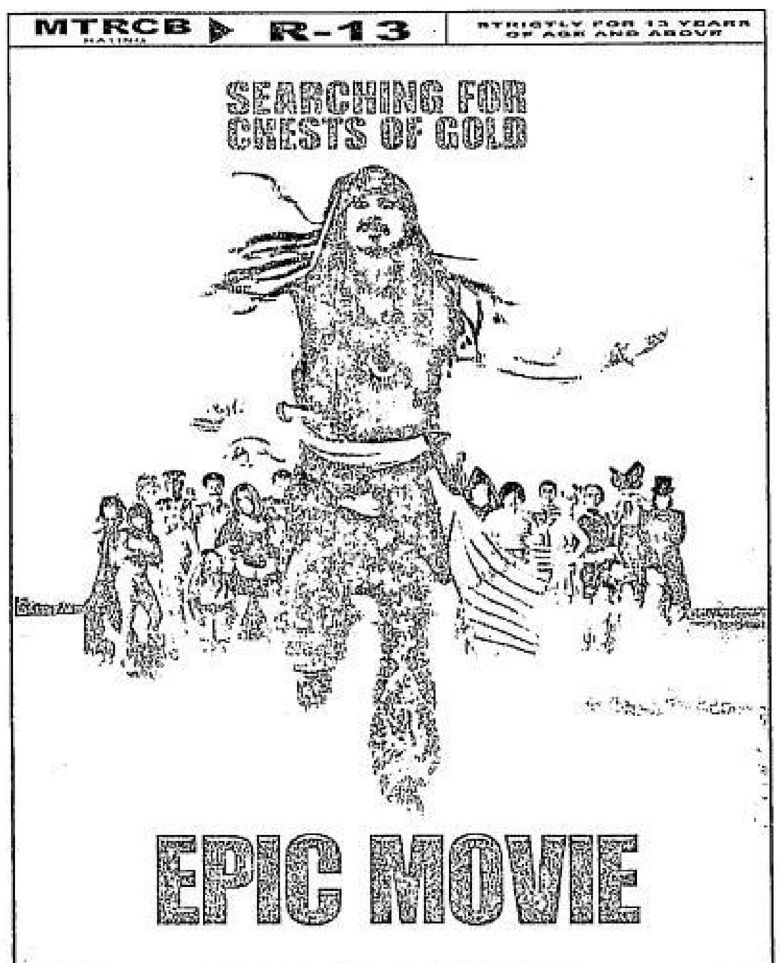
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EPIC MOVIE
OPENS FEBRUARY 21

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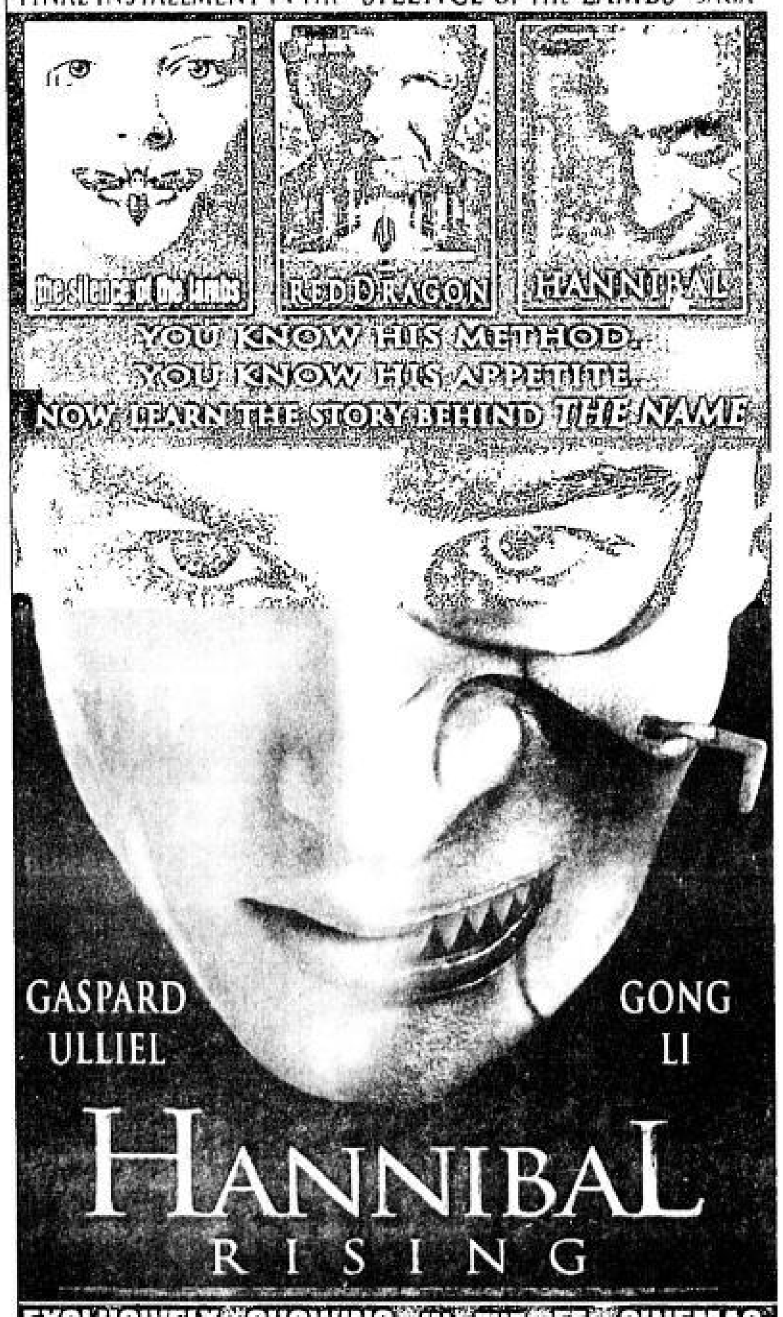
the silence of the lambs
RED DRAGON
HANNIBAL
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YOU KNOW HIS APPETITE.
NOW LEARN THE STORY BEHIND THE NAME
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GONG LI
HANNIBAL RISING
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MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

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NO. 1 IN THE PHILIPPINES!
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But no one listens. No one believes.
Now, no one will live.
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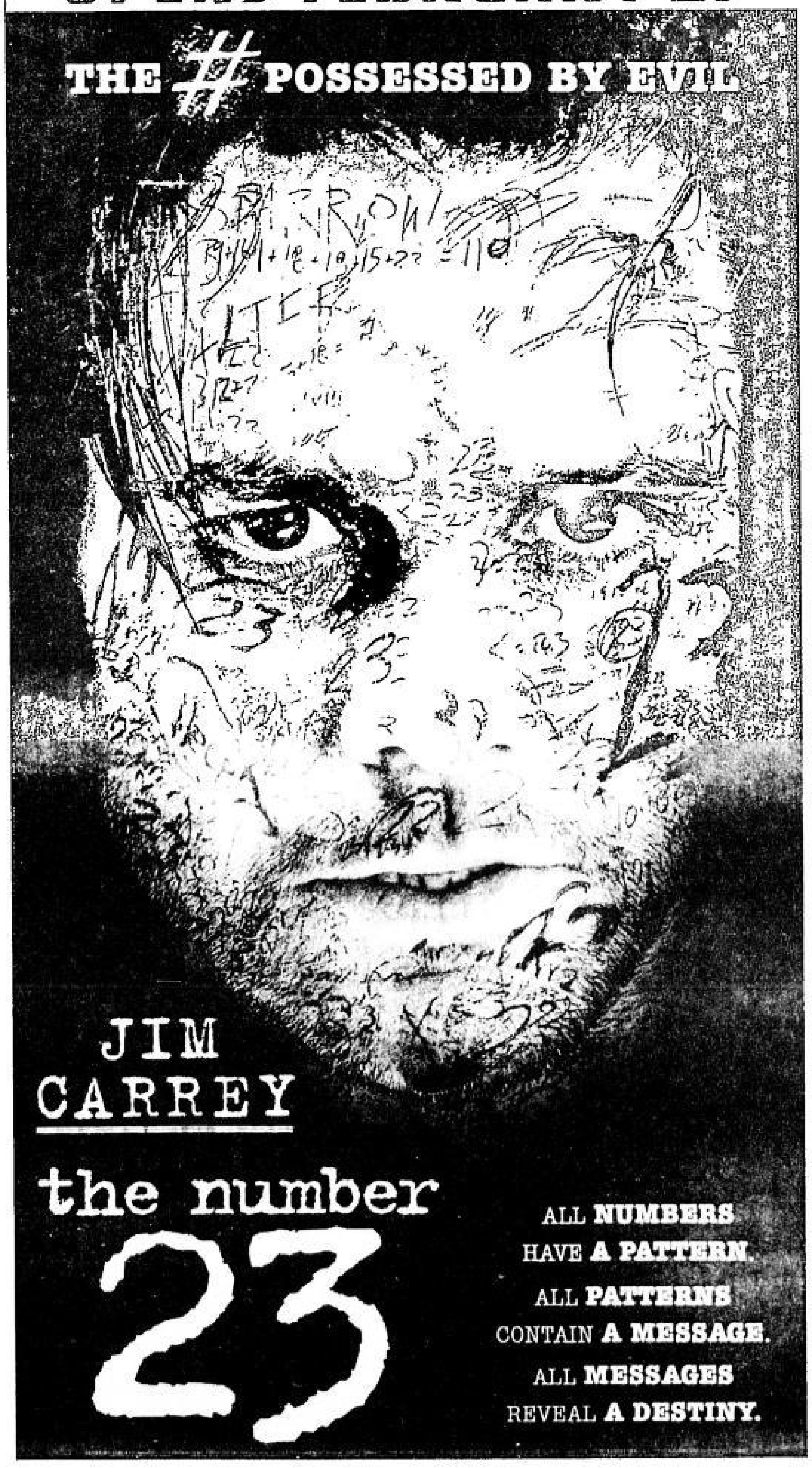
THE # POSSESSED BY EVIL
JIM CARREY
the number 23
ALL NUMBERS
HAVE A PATTERN.
ALL PATTERNS
CONTAIN A MESSAGE.
ALL MESSAGES
REVEAL A DESTINY.

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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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3 (DOLBY)	MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 (DOLBY)	THE HOLIDAY

PREMIERE

(DOLBY)	GHOST RIDER

Masagana CINEMA
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1	THE PROMISE
2	GHOST RIDER
3	TROIKA

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1	GHOST RIDER
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Jade Cinema
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Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pro del Pilar, Makati City
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4	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	THE PROMISE
2	ERAGON

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	THE FOUNTAIN
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starmall
EDSA SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266160

3	GHOST RIDER
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	THE PROMISE
5	TROIKA

metropolis star cinema
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1	THE PROMISE
2	TROIKA
3	GHOST RIDER
4	APOCALYPTO

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	APOCALYPTO
2	THE PROMISE
3 (DOLBY)	GHOST RIDER
4	

THEATRES

	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2	THE PROMISE
3	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1	RESERVED
2 (DOLBY)	RESERVED
3	RESERVED
4	RESERVED

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271

1	THE PROMISE
	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3	RESRVED
4	RESRVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2	THE PROMISE
3 (DOLBY)	BLOOD DIAMOND

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	THE PROMISE
2	BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1	APOCALYPTO
2	GHOST RIDER
3	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4	MUSIC & LYRICS
5	THE HOLIDAY
6	GHOST RIDER
7	THE FOUNTAIN
8	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
9	THE MESSENGERS
10	THE PROMISE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1	GHOST RIDER
2	THE PROMISE
3 (DOLBY)	APOCALYPTO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1	THE PROMISE
2	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY)	THE PROMISE
2 (DOLBY)	GHOST RIDER
3 (DOLBY)	MUSIC & LYRICS
4 (DOLBY)	RESERVED

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1	PLEASE CALL
2	PLEASE CALL

Lianas Cinema
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1	TROIKA
2	APOCALYPTO
3	PLEASE CALL
4	PLEASE CALL

Lianas MovieCity
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1	APOCALYPTO
2	TATLONG BARAHA
3	THE PROMISE
4	PLEASE CALL
5	GHOST RIDER

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

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2	GHOST RIDER
3	THE PROMISE
4	MUSIC & LYRICS
5	TROIKA

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3	BABEL
4	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

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1	THE PROMISE
2	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3	TROIKA
4	APOCALYPTO

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 ; 879.2029

1	PLEASE CALL
2	PLEASE CALL

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Music from 'Dreamgirls'

SPIN CITY

"DREAMGIRLS"

MUSIC WORLD MUSIC, Columbia Records and Sony BMG have released "Dreamgirls—Music From the Motion Picture," the official soundtrack album of the DreamWorks/Paramount film "Dreamgirls."

The album features performances by Beyoncé, Jamie Foxx, Eddie Murphy and Jennifer Hudson, including "And I Am Telling You (I'm Not Going)," "One Night Only" and "Listen."

It is available in standard CDs and limited edition deluxe 2-CD editions with two CDs, bonus tracks and 36-page booklet.

Christian songs

Praise Inc. has launched "10 Great Christian Love Songs Volume 1," featuring 10 Christian love songs originally performed by noted artists like Michael W. Smith, Steven Curtis Chapman and Jaci Velasquez.

Among these songs are "Love Of My Life," "I Will Be Here," "Imagine Me Without You," "Flesh Of My Flesh" and "Holding Hands."

Another Praise album, "Forever Yours," offers new love songs as well as performance tracks and wedding march—professional and recessional instrumentals.

SILENT Sanctuary

Love album

Silent Sanctuary's new album, "Fuchsiang Pag-ibig," is a 12-track all-original CD of love songs, laced with classical strings and guitar riffs.

Released by Universal Records, it showcases the color of love according to the listener's eyes.

Silent Sanctuary is Anjo Inacay on cello, Chino David on violins, Allen Calixto on drums, Paolo Legaspi on bass and Sarkie Sarangay on guitars and lead vocals.

Jazz collection

Skarlet, the voice behind the hit songs "Manila Girl" and "My Boy Lollipop," launches her debut album "The Powder Room Stories."

The 14-track jazz album, which includes 10 original compositions and four covers, weaves stories of Skarlet's life and music.

The album opens with the self-titled song, "Skarlet," in which she reveals her true self in a spunky '30s-inspired arrangement.

Other songs in the album include "Call Me," "Lullaby for Ganei," "The Way That You Do," "One Way Ticket To The Blues," "Babae Ka" and "I'm In Love With A Dream."

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CINEMA 4 MUSIC AND LYRICS PG-13
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MUSIC MUSEUM

Feb. 16 & 17, 2007	Passion Y Fuego	8:00 PM
March 08, 2007	EDNA LEDESMA	8:00 PM
	"DANCING W/ THE CHAMPIONS"	
March 16 & 23, 2007	SITTI ... IN LOVE	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
Feb. 20, 2007	DYORDS KO PO	8:00 PM
Feb. 14, 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM
March 9, 2007	DAVE	8:00 PM

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February 14
The Bloomfields in Love

February 15
David Pomeranz

February 16
Nyoy Volante

February 17
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1 THE FOUNTAIN
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
PG-13

2 GHOST RIDER
2:30, 5:20, 8:10, 11:00
PG-13

3 MUSIC & LYRICS
12:55, 3:20, 5:55, 8:30, 11:00
PG-13

4 THE HOLIDAY
2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10
PG-13

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41

THE HOLIDAY PG13
THE FOUNTAIN PG13
MUSIC AND LYRICS PG13
GHOST RIDER PG13
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER R13
GHOST RIDER PG13

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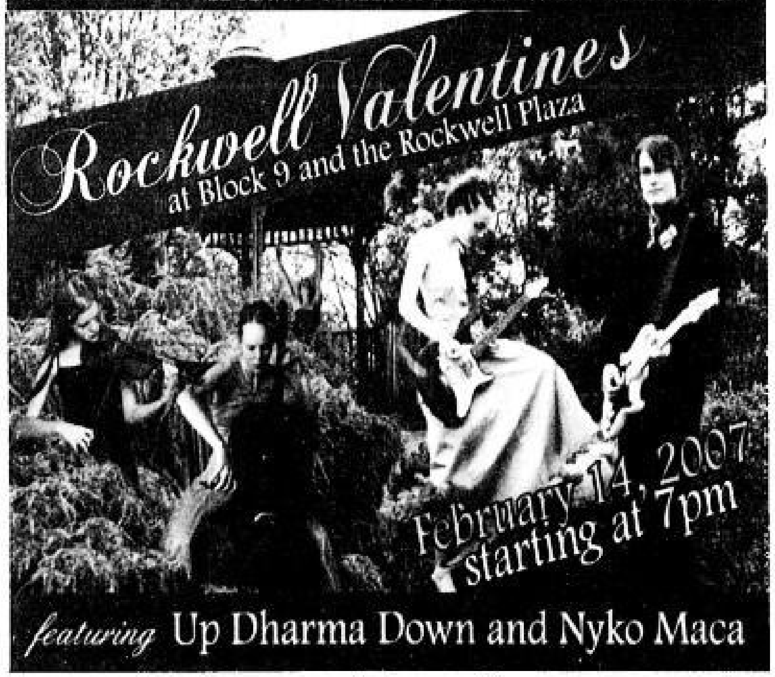
Rockwell Valentines
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February 14, 2007
starting at 7pm
featuring Up Dharma Down and Nyko Maca

POWER PLANT MALL

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MTRCB PG-13
1:00, 3:50, 6:40, 9:30
2 THE FOUNTAIN
MTRCB PG-13
12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
MTRCB PG-13
2:10, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00
4 THE HOLIDAY
MTRCB PG-13
1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
PREMIERE THEATRE GHOST RIDER
MTRCB PG-13
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00
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Nicolas Cage enjoys a helluva trip in 'Ghost Rider'

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
Correspondent

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—"I DID not sell my soul to the devil!" quipped Oscar awardee Nicolas "Nic" Cage.

Clad in a blue jacket, his face looking thinner than the first time we met him several years ago, Nic was gamely reacting to a question, made in jest, on whether he made a pact with the devil to grab his "dream role" as the Ghost Rider.

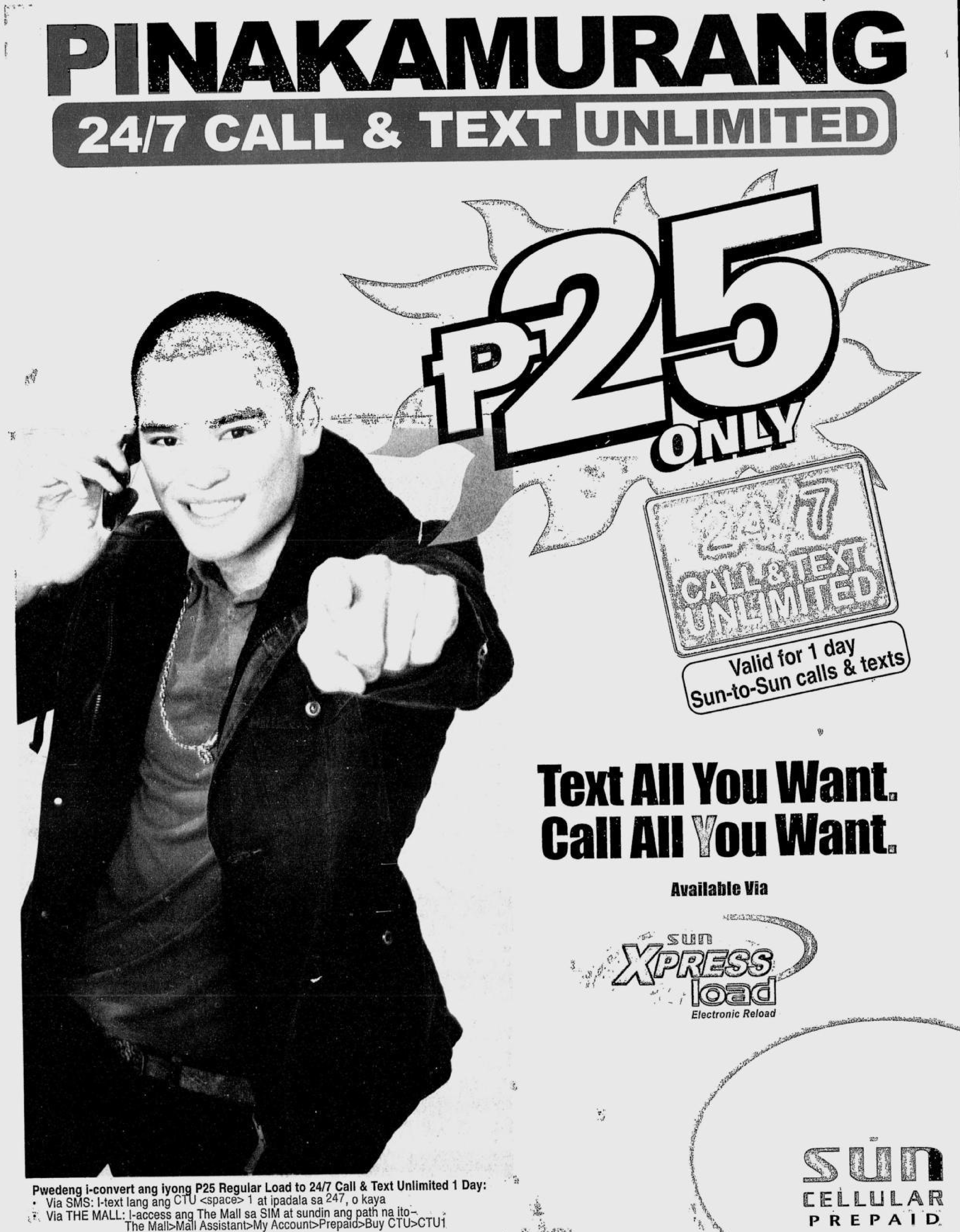
The latest Marvel Comics superhero tale to make it to the big screen, "Ghost Rider" is the story of motorcycle stunt performer Johnny Blaze (Cage) who agrees to sell his soul to the devil to save his father from a fatal illness. He transforms into the Ghost Rider whenever evil folks are around him.

"I admit that this has been my dream role ever since I was 7 years old. I just got lucky that I was offered the part," he explained when we interviewed him at Stage 11 on the Sony Studios lot in Culver City.

Nic, once considered for the role of Superman, is a comics fanatic and collector who believes these

NICOLAS/ H2

OSCAR winner stars in movie about "one of the most unique mythologies in the comic book universe."



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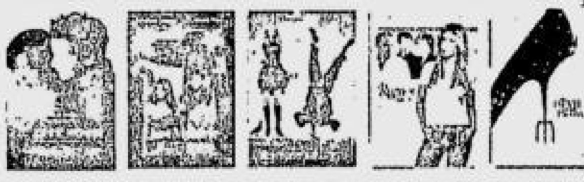

..plus roses, kissmarks, photos and express-your-love boards just like the memorable high school fair days, only this month of hearts at SM Cinema.

Treat your loved one to movies and more at SM Cinema's Lovefest

- SM Cinema's LoveFest runs on February 12, 13, 14, 19 and 20
- Movies and activities may vary from branch to branch.
- Contact your nearest SM Cinema for the details.

Distributed by Warner Bros. Picture and 20th Century Fox Films

MTRCB Rating R-13

SM CINEMA

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CATCH AND RELEASE

Distributed by Columbia Pictures
MTRCB Rating: PG-13

Catch the movie on the following dates at these SM Cinemas:
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February 21 to 27 at SM Megamall
February 28 to March 6 at Mall of Asia
March 7 to 13 at Manila

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SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104

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Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250

1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE MESSENGER
4 LOVE FEST 2007
5 THE FOUNTAIN
6 THE CLEANER

PREMIERE CINEMA
THE PROMISE

CENTERSTAGE
GHOST RIDER

THE PODIUM

CINEMA 1
GHOST RIDER

CINEMA 2
THE FOUNTAIN

633-8976

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1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 GHOST RIDER
5 THE HOLIDAY
6 GHOST RIDER
7 MUSIC AND LYRICS
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
9 THE CLEANER
10 AGENT X44
11 THE PROMISE
12 THE MESSENGER

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1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 THE HOLIDAY
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE MESSENGER
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 MUSIC AND LYRICS
7 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
8 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
9 RESERVED
10 THE PROMISE
11 BABEL
12 THE CLEANER

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1 THE HOLIDAY
2 AGENT X44
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE
7 GHOST RIDER
8 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
9 THE MESSENGER
10 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
11 THE CLEANER
12 THE PROMISE

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1 GHOST RIDER
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 THE PROMISE
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 THE MESSENGER
6 THE CLEANER
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
6 AGENT X44
9 THE HOLIDAY
10 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 GHOST RIDER
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 THE MESSENGER
6 THE PROMISE

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1 THE PROMISE
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
7 THE HOLIDAY
8 THE MESSENGER
9 THE CLEANER

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1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 THE MESSENGER
6 GHOST RIDER
7 THE HOLIDAY
8 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
9 THE PROMISE
10 AGENT X44
11 ROB-B-HOOD
12 THE CLEANER

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

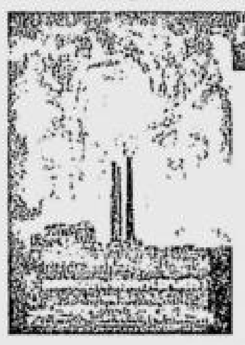
1 THE MESSENGER
2 THE PROMISE
3 TENACIOUS D
4 GHOST RIDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1 GHOST RIDER
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE PROMISE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1 THE MESSENGER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE PROMISE
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS



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2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE MESSENGER
5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
6 THE PROMISE
7 MUSIC AND LYRICS
8 THE HOLIDAY

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 THE MESSENGER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 THE PROMISE
6 THE PROMISE

SM CITY MARILAO (044)0332013-17

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2 THE PROMISE
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE MESSENGER

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1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE PROMISE
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB

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2 THE MESSENGER
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 THE CLEANER
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE

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1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 THE PROMISE
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80

1 THE PROMISE
2 THE RETURN
3 SHAOLIN VS EVIL DEAD
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39

1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE MESSENGER
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 THE PROMISE

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1 THE PROMISE
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341205-08

1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 THE MESSENGER
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE PROMISE

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

1 BABEL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE CLEANER
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS
5 THE HOLIDAY
6 THE MESSENGER
7 THE PROMISE
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 BABEL
2 RESERVED
3 THE CLEANER
4 THE PROMISE
5 GHOST RIDE
6 THE HOLIDAY
7 RESERVED
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

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1 GHOST RIDER
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE MESSENGER
5 BABEL
6 BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884

1 GHOST RIDE
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 THE PROMISE
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

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GALLERIA

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1 GHOST RIDER • THX
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 indieSine: ROME and JULIET
4 THE MESSENGERS
5 THE FOUNTAIN
6 THE PROMISE
7 GHOST RIDER
8 THE CLEANER
9 THE HOLIDAY
HANNIBAL RISING
10 TROIKA

ERMITA

Ticket Price:P110 536-7809 to 12

1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE HOLIDAY
THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE MESSENGERS
HANNIBAL RISING
4 TROIKA
5 THE FOUNTAIN
6 MUSIC and LYRICS
7 THE PROMISE

METRO EAST

Ticket Price: P100 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE MESSENGERS
2 GHOST RIDER
3 MUSIC and LYRICS
4 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
5 THE HOLIDAY
THE CLEANER
6 APOCALYPTO
NIGHT at the MUSEUM
7 TROIKA
8 THE PROMISE

NOVALICHES

Ticket Price: P91 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 TROIKA
4 MUSIC and LYRICS
5 THE PROMISE

PIONEER

Ticket Price:P107 687-5378

1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 MUSIC and LYRICS
4 THE PROMISE

The Sexiest Date Movie
this February

Rome & Juliet

LOVE KNOWS NO RULES.

OPENS ON FEBRUARY 14
AT ROBINSONS GALLERIA INDIE SINE

Cinema One Originals 2006
WINNER, BEST ACTRESS
Mylene Dizon

CINEMA ONE ORIGINALS & I.O.U. ONE PRODUCTIONS PRESENT
A CONNIE S.A. MACATUNO FILM

starring: Andrea Del Rosario Mylene Dizon Rafael Rosell Miko Palanca
Lui Villaruz Liza Dino Crispin Pineda Frances Makil-Ignacio CJ Mercado
Joshua Deocareza with Glydel Mercado
and Ms. Tessie Tomas

MTRCB Rating R18

STA ROSA

Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (049) 837-0907

1 APOCALYPTO
2 GHOST RIDER
3 BABEL
4 THE PROMISE

LIPA

Ticket Price: P90 (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
2 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE PROMISE
4 BABEL

DASMARIÑAS

Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (046) 416-4332

1 THE PROMISE
2 GHOST RIDER
3 TROIKA

ANGELES

Ticket Price: P 90 (045) 892-2348

1 MUSIC and LYRICS
2 THE CLEANER
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER

IMUS

Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 THE PROMISE
2 TROIKA
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE MESSENGERS
5 MUSIC and LYRICS
6 THE CLEANER

STARMILLS

Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (045) 875-1927

1 MUSIC and LYRICS
2 THE PROMISE
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 THE CLEANER
6 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

BACOLOD

Ticket Price:P70 (034) 441-0453

1 THE PROMISE
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 GHOST RIDER
4 BABEL
5 THE CLEANER
6 indie Sine: COMPOUND

ILOILO

Ticket Price: P60.50/67.50/70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 THE HOLIDAY
2 THE PROMISE
3 GHOST RIDER
4 BABEL
5 THE CLEANER

indieSine Featured FILM

for this week

Rome and Juliet

starring. Mylene Dizon and Andrea del Rosario

This tale follows the romantic journey of two straight women caught in a web of forbidden love. Juliet, a conservative pre-school teacher hires Rome, a liberated businesswoman to be her wedding planner. As they go through the preparations, the two develop a relationship that the groom to be soon finds out.

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From page H1

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The actor confessed he had n pacts in his life. "I sometimes fi where I think I should not have ize I made a mistake and so I wo negative into a positive. But no soul to the devil. It's just that w ple who do not have our best make mistakes and we should le

Gym work

To prepare for the part, the closed that he worked out in th day for a year before filming st shooting, Nic would do high-impact aerobic exercises.

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A '70s kind of guy

"One thing about Nic," Mark pointed out, "is that he took the role and made it his own,"

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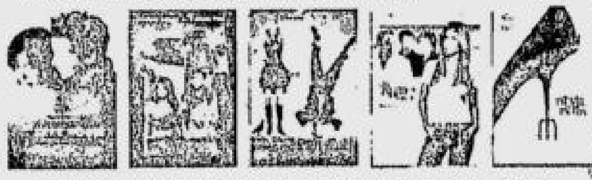

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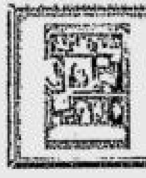
- SM Cinema's LoveFest runs on February 12, 13, 14, 19 and 20.
- Movies and activities may vary from branch to branch.
- Contact your nearest SM Cinema for the details.

Distributed by Warner Bros. Picture and 20th Century Fox Films

MTRCB Rating: R-13

SM CINEMA

MALL OF ASIA · MEGAMALL · NORTH EDSA · FAIRVIEW · CITY MANILA · SAN LAZARO
STA.MESA · SOUTHMALL · STA. ROSA · CEBU · ILOILO · DAVAO · CAGAYAN DE ORO



CATCH AND RELEASE
Distributed by Columbia Pictures
MTRCB Rating: PG-13

Catch the movie on the following dates at these SM Cinemas:
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February 21 to 27 at SM Megamall
February 28 to March 6 at Mall of Asia
March 7 to 13 at Manila

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
SAN MIGUEL Coca-Cola IMAX THEATRE
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
1:00PM 3:30PM 6:00PM 8:30PM
Matinee Fee- P200 Primetime Fee- P250

1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE MESSENGER
4 LOVE FEST 2007
5 THE FOUNTAIN
6 THE CLEANER

PREMIERE CINEMA
THE PROMISE

CENTERSTAGE
GHOST RIDER

THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
GHOST RIDER
CINEMA 2
THE FOUNTAIN
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 GHOST RIDER
5 THE HOLIDAY
6 GHOST RIDER
7 MUSIC AND LYRICS
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
9 THE CLEANER
10 AGENT X44
11 THE PROMISE
12 THE MESSENGER

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 THE HOLIDAY
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE MESSENGER
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 MUSIC AND LYRICS
7 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
8 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
9 RESERVED
10 THE PROMISE
11 BABEL
12 THE CLEANER

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 THE HOLIDAY
2 AGENT X44
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE
7 GHOST RIDER
8 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
9 THE MESSENGER
10 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
11 THE CLEANER
12 THE PROMISE

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 GHOST RIDER
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 THE PROMISE
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 THE MESSENGER
6 THE CLEANER
7 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
8 AGENT X44
9 THE HOLIDAY
10 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 GHOST RIDER
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 THE MESSENGER
6 THE PROMISE

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 THE PROMISE
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
7 THE HOLIDAY
8 THE MESSENGER
9 THE CLEANER

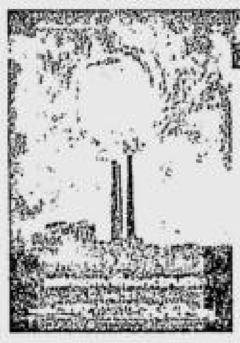
SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 THE MESSENGER
6 GHOST RIDER
7 THE HOLIDAY
8 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
9 THE PROMISE
10 AGENT X44
11 ROB-B-HOOD
12 THE CLEANER

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 THE MESSENGER
2 THE PROMISE
3 TENACIOUS D
4 GHOST RIDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 GHOST RIDER
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE PROMISE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 THE MESSENGER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE PROMISE
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS



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1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE MESSENGER
5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
6 THE PROMISE
7 MUSIC AND LYRICS
8 THE HOLIDAY

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 THE MESSENGER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 THE PROMISE
6 THE PROMISE

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE MESSENGER

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE PROMISE
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE MESSENGER
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 THE CLEANER
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 THE PROMISE
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 THE PROMISE
2 THE RETURN
3 SHAOLIN VS EVIL DEAD
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE MESSENGER
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 THE PROMISE

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 THE PROMISE
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66
1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 THE MESSENGER
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE PROMISE

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 BABEL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE CLEANER
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS
5 THE HOLIDAY
6 THE MESSENGER
7 THE PROMISE
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

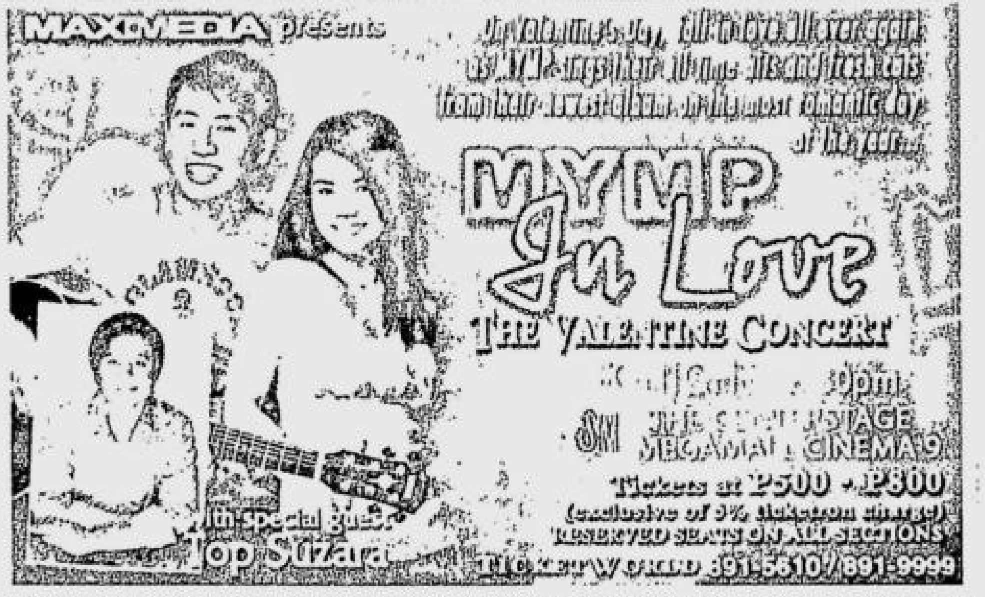
SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 BABEL
2 RESERVED
3 THE CLEANER
4 THE PROMISE
5 GHOST RIDE
6 THE HOLIDAY
7 RESERVED
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 GHOST RIDER
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE MESSENGER
5 BABEL
6 BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 GHOST RIDE
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 THE PROMISE
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHOWTIME
EVENT CALENDAR



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2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 indieSine: ROME and JULIET
4 THE MESSENGERS
5 THE FOUNTAIN
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8 THE CLEANER
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HANNIBAL RISING
10 TROIKA

ERMITA Ticket Price:P110 536-7809 to 12
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2 THE HOLIDAY
THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE MESSENGERS
HANNIBAL RISING
4 TROIKA
5 THE FOUNTAIN
6 MUSIC and LYRICS
7 THE PROMISE

METRO EAST Ticket Price:P100 682-8193 - 682-8199
1 THE MESSENGERS
2 GHOST RIDER
3 MUSIC and LYRICS
4 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
5 THE HOLIDAY
THE CLEANER
6 APOCALYPTO
NIGHT at the MUSEUM
7 TROIKA
8 THE PROMISE

NOVALICHES Ticket Price:P[illegible] 935-3231 / 935-3229-30
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 TROIKA
4 MUSIC and LYRICS
5 THE PROMISE

PIONEER Ticket Price:P102 687-5378
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 MUSIC and LYRICS
4 THE PROMISE

The Sexiest Date Movie
this February
Rome & Juliet

Opens On February 14
at Robinsons Galleria Indie Sine

Cinema One Originals 2006
Winner, Best Actress
Mylene Dizon

Love knows no rules.

Cinema One Originals & I.O.U. One Productions Present
a Connie S.A. Macatuno film
starring: Andrea Del Rosario Mylene Dizon Rafael Rosell Miko Palanca
Lui Villaruz Liza Dino Crispin Pineda Frances Makil-Ignacio CJ Mercado
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3 BABEL
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DASMARIÑAS Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (046) 416-4332
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2 THE CLEANER
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER

IMUS Ticket Price:P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8168
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2 TROIKA
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE MESSENGERS
5 MUSIC and LYRICS
6 THE CLEANER

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2 THE PROMISE
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4 THE HOLIDAY
5 THE CLEANER
6 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

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3 GHOST RIDER
4 BABEL
5 THE CLEANER
6 indie Sine: COMPOUND

ILOILO Ticket Price: P60.50/67.50/70.50 (033) 336-8070
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for this week
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starring: Mylene Dizon and Andrea del Rosario

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A '70s kind of guy

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Mark pointed out. "So Ghost Rider can be serious at times and then funny at other times."

Nic explained: "It was a very '70s era when I was growing up. I jumped on my bike like Evel Knievel. I still love jellybeans, but I am not a jellybean nut. It is my close relationship with sugar—I call it 'granulated happiness.' Isn't candy the first real sin or a child's introduction to what is bad?"

To illustrate his love for the character, Nic revealed that he has a skull tattoo on his arm.

"The skull is a beautiful thing," he said. "We all have it. I have it. You have it. That is the nice thing about the Ghost Rider. He is a flaming skull, a symbol of honesty. He does not have a mask to hide the truth. He is honest. He does not hide behind a fake smile. He is real."

He recalled the moment when he learned that he had cinched the Ghost Rider role: "I was riding my motorcycle in Hawaii—which was just so appropriate. I grew up on comic books and I am a motorcycle enthusiast, so it was the perfect opportunity for me."

Then he added after a brief pause, "I think I was destined to play the Ghost Rider."

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43-year-old actor dis-
gym five hours every-
rted. And then while

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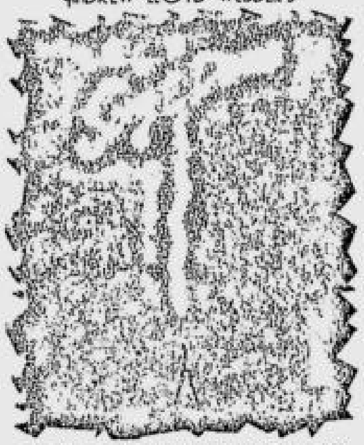

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with Carla Guevara-Laforteza and Powerdance
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Direction by Joy Virata
Choreography by Douglas Nierras

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The Sexiest Date Movie
this February

Rome & Juliet

OPENS ON FEBRUARY 14
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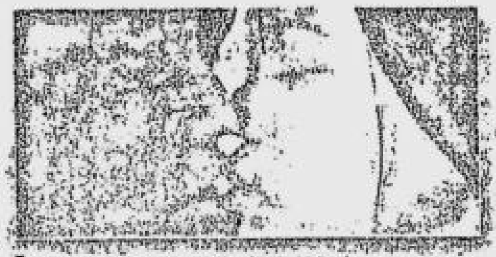

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and Ms. Tessie Tomas

MTRCB Rating: R18

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AT THE CINEMAS

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THX

G1	1 MUSIC & LYRICS	2 GHOST RIDER	3 THE FOUNTAIN	4 THE PROMISE
G4	1 THE FOUNTAIN	2 GHOST RIDER	3 THX GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE HISTORY BOYS	5 THE MESSENGERS	6 MUSIC & LYRICS	7 THE PROMISE
GB1	1 GHOST RIDER	2 MUSIC & LYRICS		
GB3	1 THX GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MUSIC & LYRICS GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 THE HISTORY BOYS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE FOUNTAIN GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC	1 THX GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	2 MUSIC & LYRICS		
	3 THE FOUNTAIN	4 THE HOLIDAY	5 THE PROMISE	
ACC	1 GHOST RIDER	2 MUSIC & LYRICS	3 THE PROMISE	4 THE MESSENGERS
M2	1 THE PROMISE	2 THE FOUNTAIN		
	3 THE MESSENGERS	4 GHOST RIDER	5 MUSIC & LYRICS	

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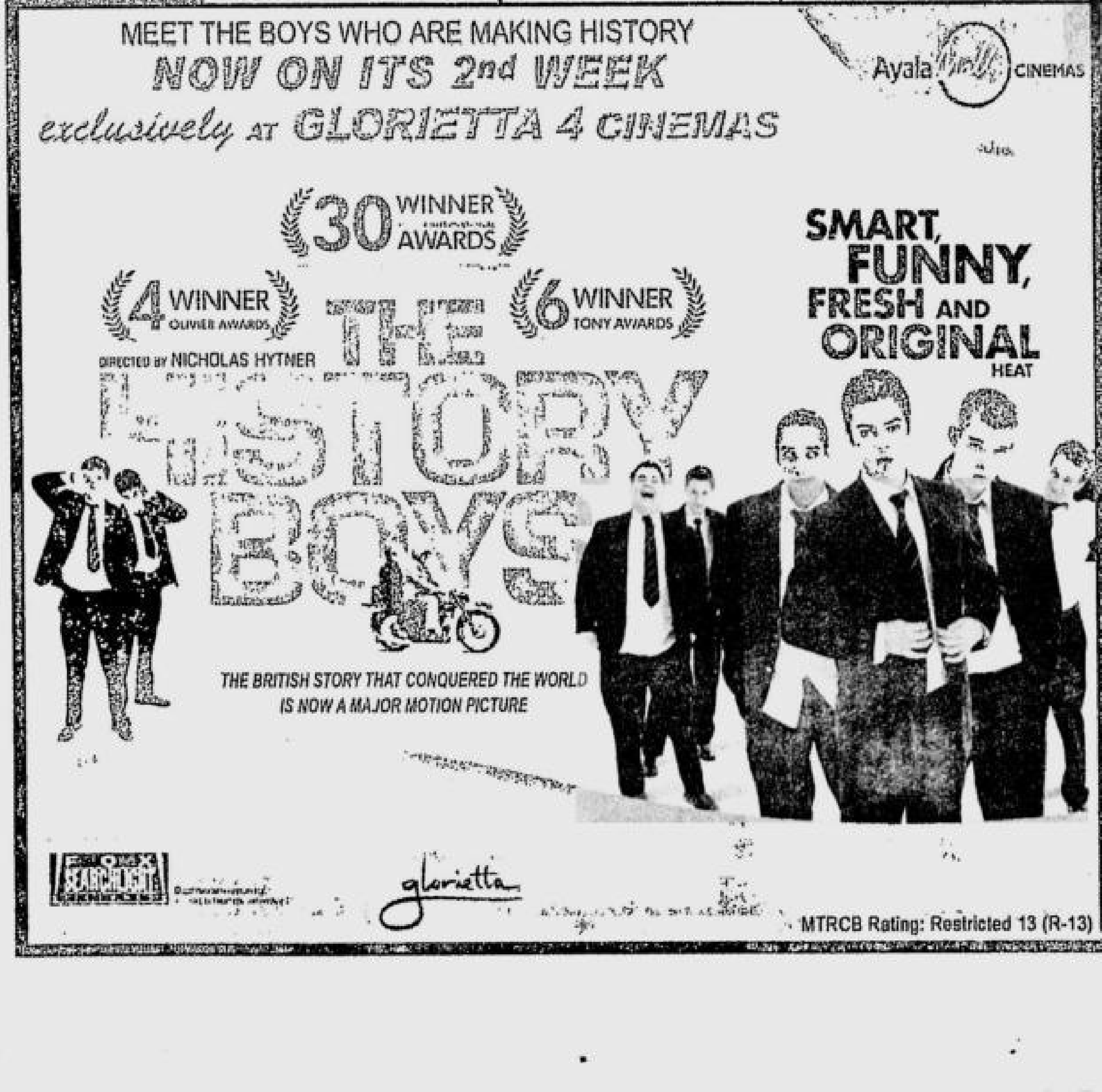
MEET THE BOYS WHO ARE MAKING HISTORY
NOW ON ITS 2nd WEEK
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30 WINNER AWARDS
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6 WINNER TONY AWARDS
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FOX SEARCHLIGHT
glorietta
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)

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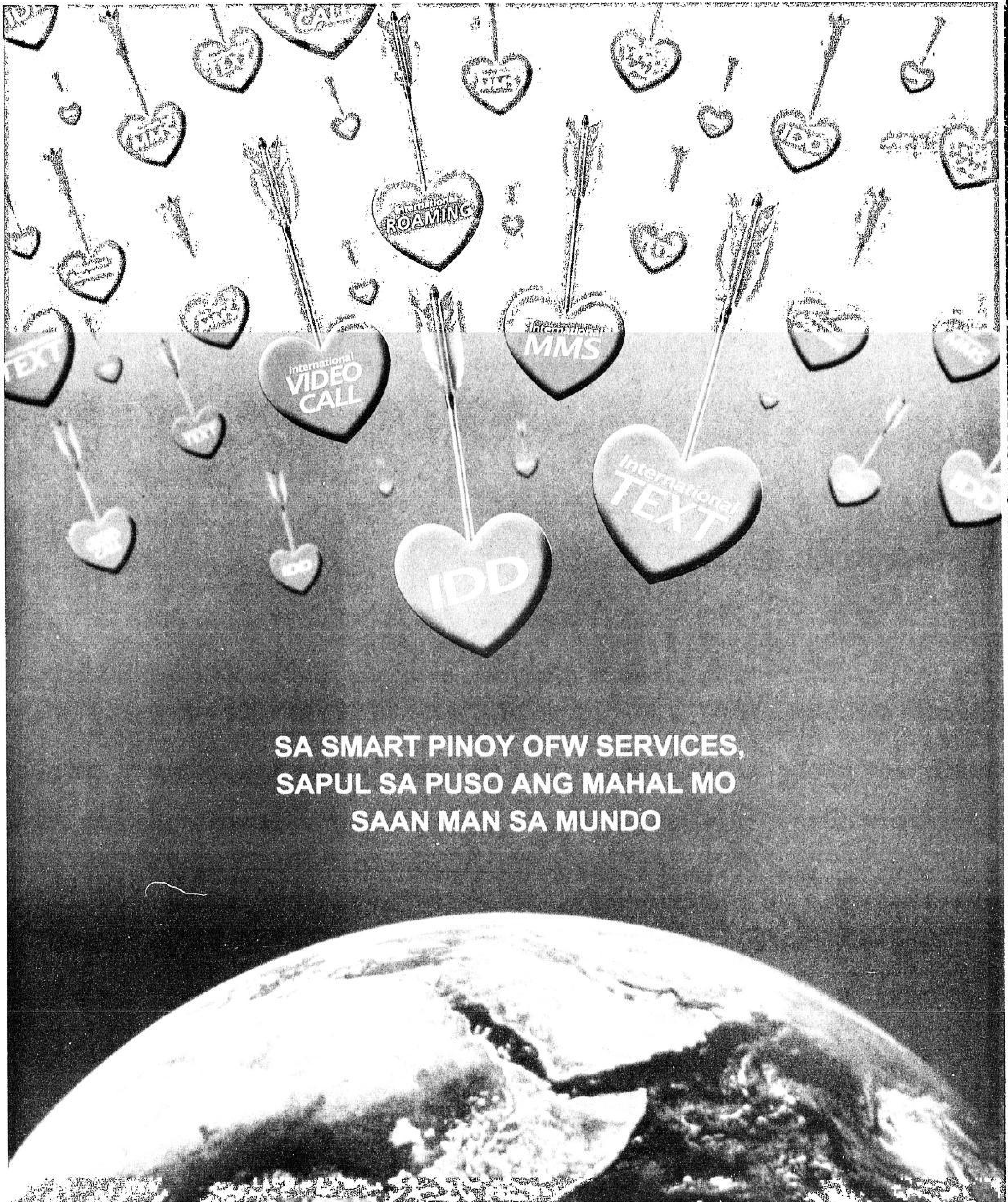

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OPENING TODAY

The Promise

Stars Angel Locsin, Richard Gutierrez, TJ Trinidad, Rhian Ramos

Directed by Mike Tuviera

The "Wuthering Heights" romance is revisited for the nth time in this Valentine presentation of Regal and GMA Films. Annette Gozon-Abrogar, GMA Films president, is a fan of "Hihintayin Kita sa Langit," Carlitos Siguion-Reyna's 1991 retelling of the novel. On board in the remake is "Hihintayin" scriptwriter Raquel Villavicencio, who says that "there are elements [in the new version] that were faithful to the novel." Joey Abacan, GMA Films producer, hails the Angel-Richard tandem: "Their chemistry is beyond words."

Rome & Juliet

Stars Mylene Dizon, Andrea del Rosario, Tessie Tomas, Rafael Rosel

Directed by Connie S.A. Macatuno

A product of the Cinema One Originals film fest, this "unconventional" V-Day offering recounts the "forbidden" love between a prim bride (Del Rosario) and her liberated wedding planner (Dizon). Macatuno's debut won Best Production Design and Best Actress (for Dizon) at the film fest. Robbie Tan, jury chair, commends Dizon for her "convincing portrayal." The movie was also invited to the New York International Independent Film and Video Festival. Exclusively in Indie-Sine, Robinsons Galleria.

Music and Lyrics

Stars Hugh Grant, Drew Barrymore, Brad Garrett, Haley Bennett

Directed by Marc Lawrence

A has-been '80s star (Grant) teams up with his "plant lady" (Barrymore), after he was asked to pen a song for a spoiled diva (Bennett). Todd McCarthy of Variety thinks it's "sitcommy in structure and execution." David Edwards of Daily Mirror calls it "an inoffensive romantic comedy … [but] there's little frisson." Peter Bradshaw of The Guardian insists: "[The stars] make a reasonable odd couple but [the film] never comes to life."

Ghost Rider

Stars Nicolas Cage, Wes Bentley, Eva Mendez, Peter Fonda

Directed by Mark Steven Johnson

Oscar winner Nicolas Cage plays Marvel comic-book hero Johnny Blaze, a stuntman who makes a Faustian pact with the devil (Fonda). Cage describes Blaze as a "superhero who had a terrible thing happen to him." SuperheroHype.com opines: "Cage hits one out of the park … he has created both a tragic yet fun character." Cage explains to Steve Head of IGN Movies that "It's [from] the same studio [Sony] that brought us 'Spider-Man.'"

The Fountain

Stars Hugh Jackman, Rachel Weisz, Ellen Burstyn

Directed by Darren Aronofsky

Three separate stories—set in the 16th, 20th and 26th centuries—reflect on the legend of the "Fountain of Youth" and man's quest for immortality. Kyle Smith of New York Post hails it as "a geyser of ambition … visually stunning." Writer-director Aronofsky, the maverick behind "Requiem for a Dream," recounts that this epic "started as a rough sketch on a restaurant napkin in 1999." However, original star Brad Pitt quit because of "script complaints" and the film was booed in Cannes. Carina Chocano of Los Angeles Times rants: "[This] metaphysical melodrama … [is] as pretentious as it is silly." William Arnold of Seattle Post-Intelligencer defends the "demanding, non-linear" script: it's "risky, uncompromising, spiritual-minded."

Ask the Dust

Stars Colin Farrell, Salma Hayek, Donald Sutherland

Directed by Robert Towne

Based on John Fante's novel, this Depression-era drama is directed by the scriptwriter of "Chinatown" and "Shampoo." It chronicles the tumultuous romance of a heavy-boozing Italian writer (Farrell) and a Mexican waitress (Hayek). Roger Ebert of Chicago Sun-Times asserts: "it requires an audience with a special love for film noir." Jami Bernard of New York Daily News comments: "the sepia-tinted palette drips, reeks and creaks." J. Hoberman of Village Voice calls it "a saga of sado-masochistic torment transformed into a sentimental love story."

WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

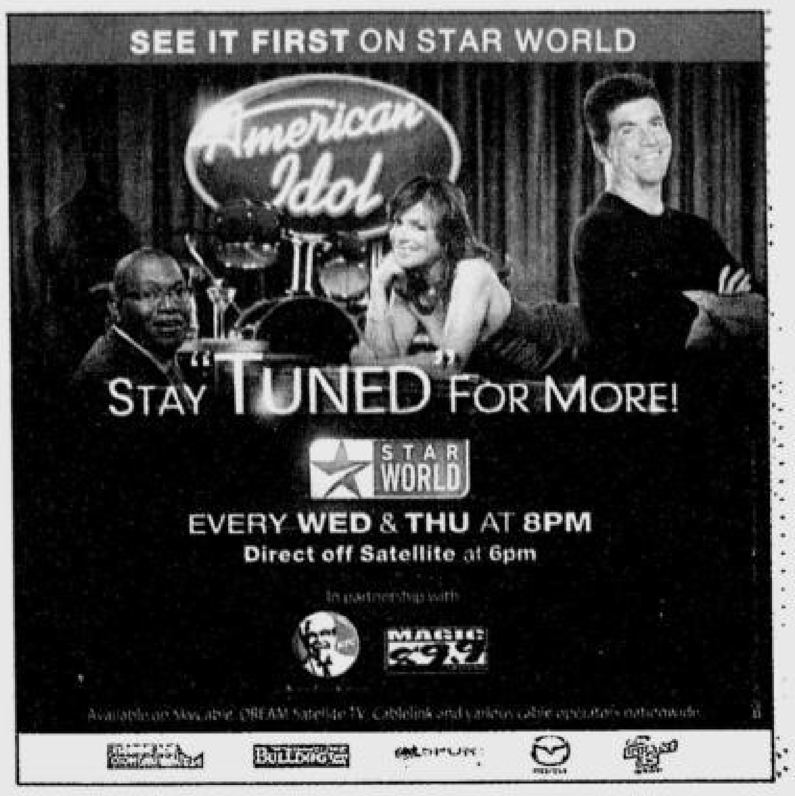
Top 10 movies at the North American box office for the three-day weekend beginning Feb 9

Norbit - Dreamworks SKG

TW	LW	Title	Gross	WR
1	☆	Norbit	$33.7 mln	1
2	☆	Hannibal Rising	$13.4 mln	1
3	2	Because I Said So	$9.0 mln	2
4	1	The Messengers	$7.2 mln	2
5	4	Night at the Museum	$5.8 mln	8
6	3	Epic Movie	$4.4 mln	3
7	5	Smokin' Aces	$3.8 mln	3
8	8	Pan's Labyrinth	$3.6 mln	7
8	7	Dreamgirls	$3.1 mln	9
10	10	The Queen	$2.5 mln	20

This Week, Last Week *Weeks in Release*
☆ *New release*
Based on studio estimates compiled on Sunday

REUTERS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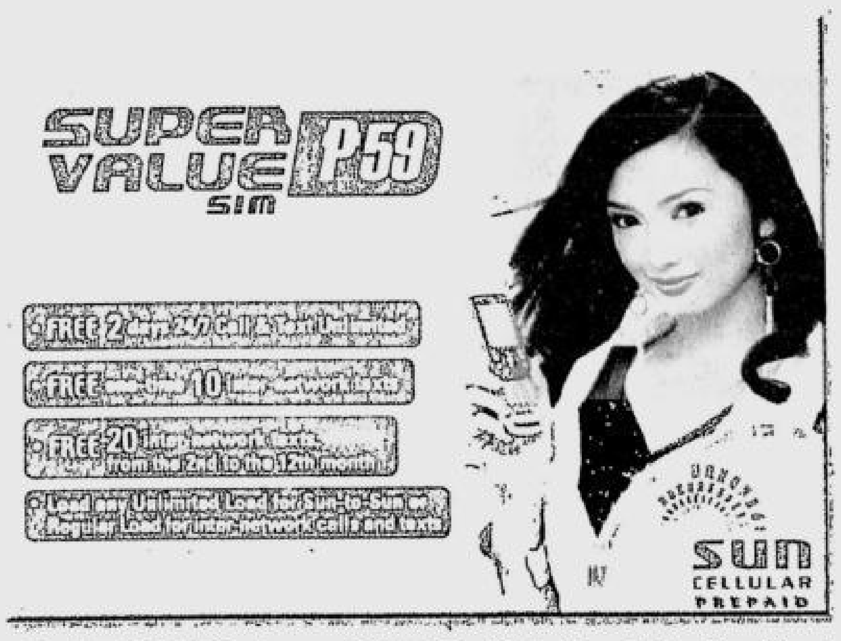
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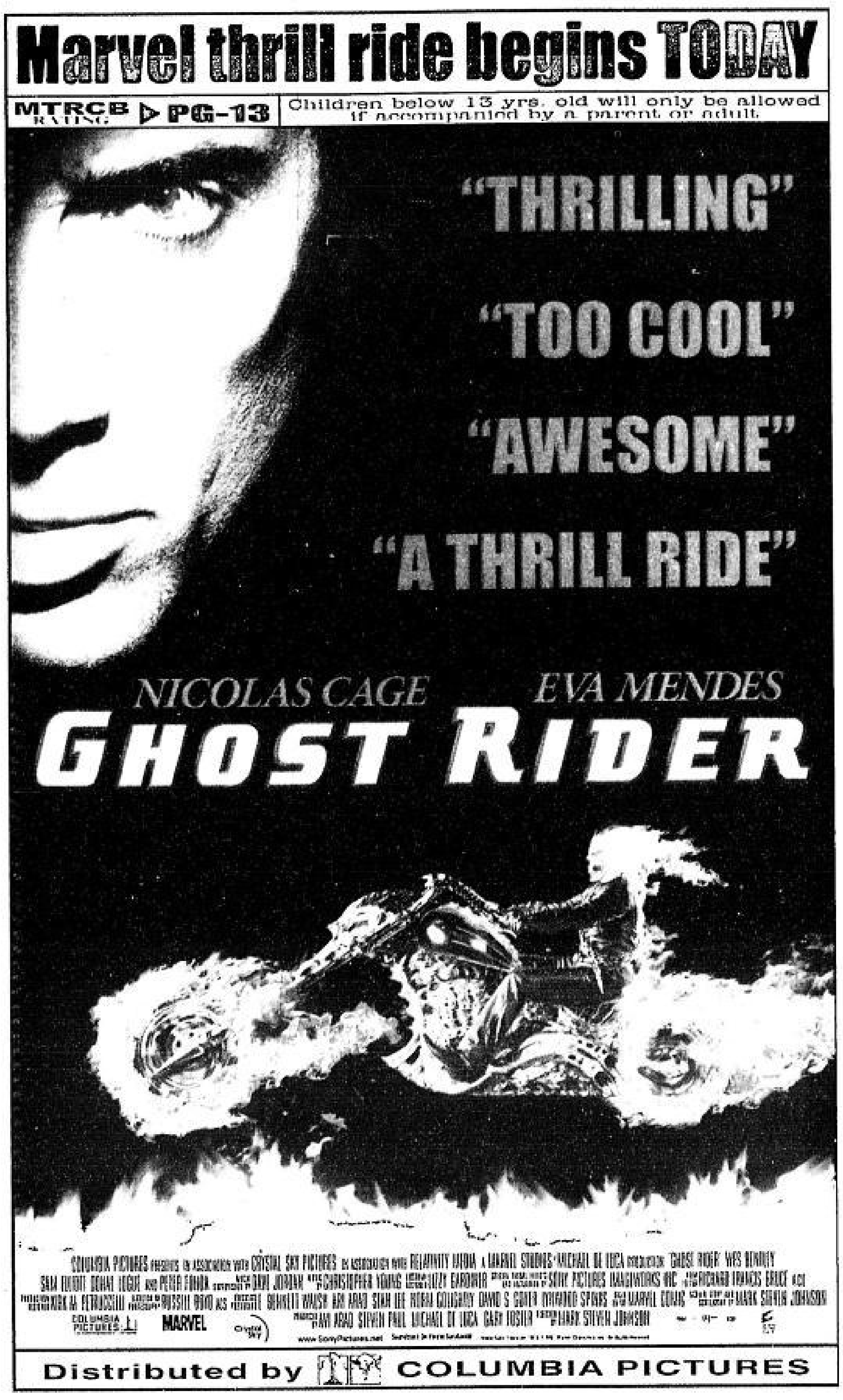
Marvel thrill ride begins TODAY
MTRCB RATING ▷ PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
"THRILLING"
"TOO COOL"
"AWESOME"
"A THRILL RIDE"
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GHOST RIDER
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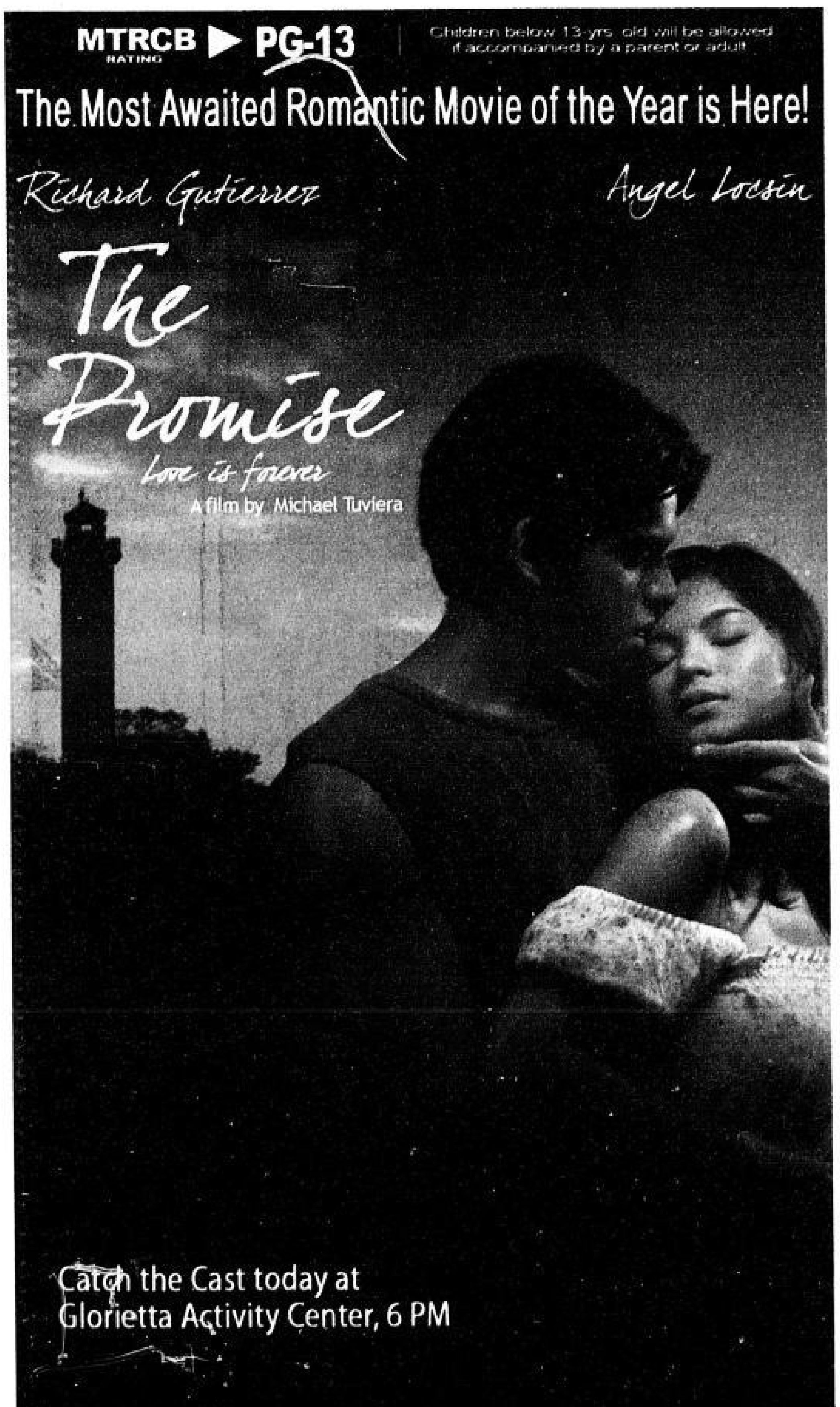
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Richard Gutierrez
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The Promise
Love is forever
A film by Michael Tuviera
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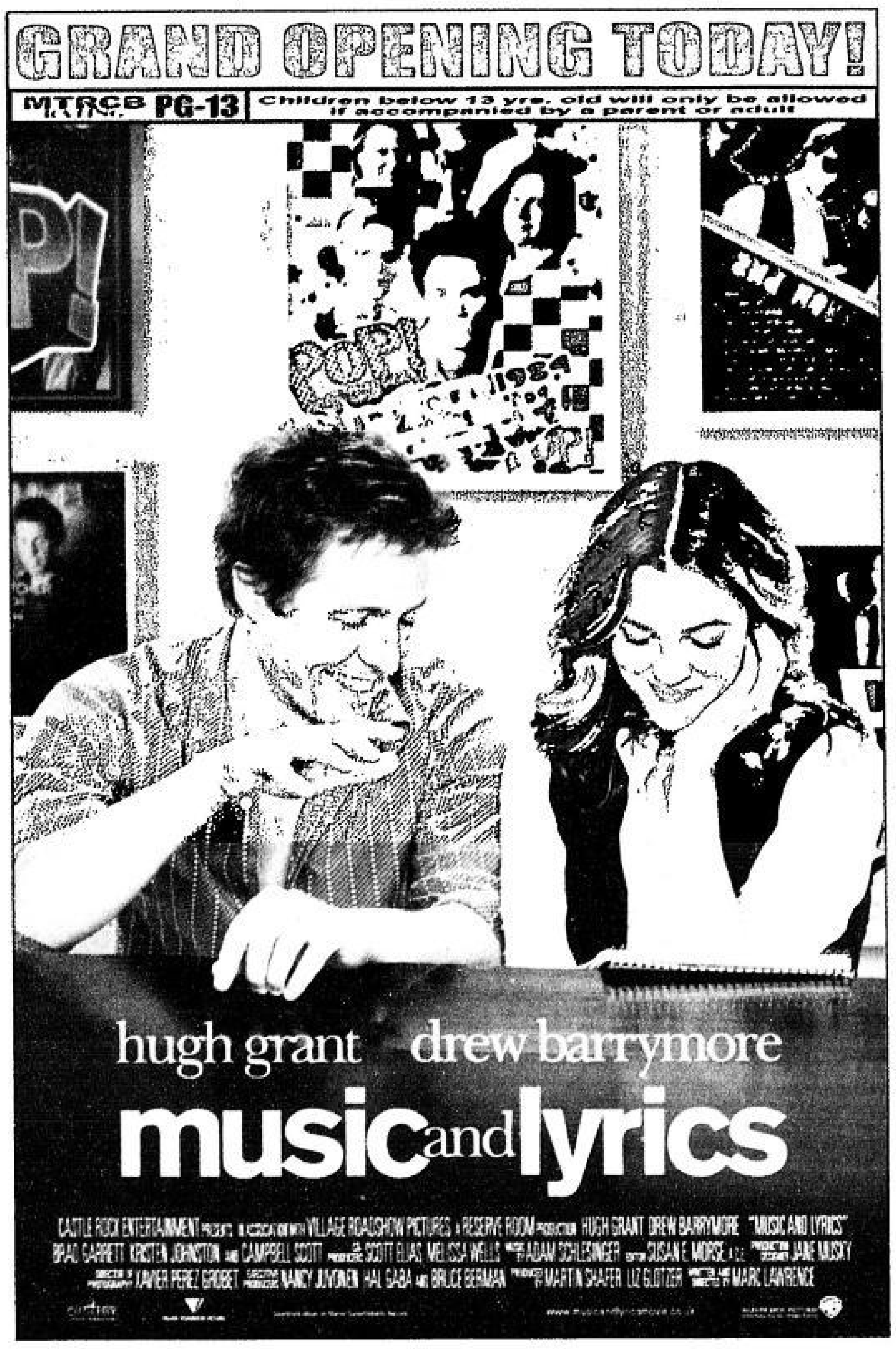
OPENS TODAY!!


GRAND OPENING TODAY!
MTRCB RATING PG-13
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hugh grant
drew barrymore
music and lyrics
CASTLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH VILLAGE ROADSHOW PICTURES A RESERVE ROOM PRODUCTION HUGH GRANT DREW BARRYMORE "MUSIC AND LYRICS"
BRAD GARRETT KRISTEN JOHNSTON AND CAMPBELL SCOTT SCOTT ELIAS MELISSA WELLS ADAM SCHLESINGER SUSAN E. MORSE A.C.E. JANE MUSKY
XAVIER PEREZ GROBET NANCY JUVONEN HAL GABA AND BRUCE BERMAN MARTIN SHAFER LIZ GLOTZER MARC LAWRENCE

MTRCB RATING ▷ PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
WHAT IF YOU COULD LIVE FOREVER?
HUGH JACKMAN
RACHEL WEISZ
THE FOUNTAIN
GRAND OPENING TODAY

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
2ND "KILIG" WEEK!
Cameron Diaz · Kate Winslet · Jude Law · Jack Black
a film by Nancy Meyers
the Holiday
UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENT A WAVERLY FILMS PRODUCTION 'THE HOLIDAY' ELI WALLACH EDWARD BURNS RUFUS SEWELL
HANS ZIMMER MARLENE STEWART JOE HUTSHING, A.C.E. JON HUTMAN DEAN CUNDEY ASC SUZANNE FARWELL
BRUCE A. BLOCK NANCY MEYERS
sony.com/TheHoliday
Release through Solar Entertainment Corporation

ENT

MARY J.
BLIGE AFP

LOS ANGELES—MARY J. BI
have set an awards-show rec
with the Grammys she won
Most people thanked in a sin
tance speech.

Accepting her R&B Album
award for "The Breakthrou
dropped 55 names—includin
sus, her three children,
record-company executives
tape delivery guy.

Blige talked for nearly
utes—an eternity on a
awards show—including goi
on for a good 30 seconds aft
the music started playing to
nal her to wind down, spittin
names faster and faster as
music swelled.

* * *

For John Mayer, the langua
might be Japanese.

The Grammy-winning singe
was asked by E! comment
Seacrest on the Grammy red ca
Jessica Simpson, to whom Ma
cently been romantically link
answered in Japanese and the
ed Seacrest get someone to
what he said and "subtitle it."

The translation came back
er had said: "She is very bea
you are the last to know."

JOHN M

* * *

Ludacris gave a "special s
to talk show hosts Oprah Wi
Bill O'Reilly as he picked up
my for best rap album Sunday

"I love ya," the rapper-a
tongue firmly in cheek.

Ludacris has been critical o
who he has said edited out m
comments when he was a gue
Oprah Winfrey Show." Othe
50 Cent and Ice Cube have
Winfrey has "a problem with h

Winfrey has insisted she d
to hip-hop. A message left
show was not immediately re

***

"American Idol" judge Ra
son was wearing his record
hat, but he took a moment to

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Grammy vignettes: Mary J mouthful and more

IGE MAY
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producer
efend the

RUSHES

TV talent show, which has come under fire this season for seemingly amping up the personal level of criticism.

Jackson said the success of show alums such as Carrie Underwood and Jennifer Hudson shows the program opens doors for undiscovered talents.

"These kids definitely help to validate what we do," Jackson said. "... People talking about how mean and crazy we are—Simon (Cowell) calling people names and all that kind of stuff—the truth of the matter is that at the end of the season, someone great that wouldn't have had a chance otherwise, wins it and gets a shot at a career and I'm really happy about that."

* * *

Rock band OK Go knows how to make a red-carpet statement: Take inspiration from upholstery.

The foursome wore matching burgundy-and-gold paisley suits topped with burqa-like face-covering headpieces as they arrived.

"It was inspired by our couch," said lead singer Damian Kulash. "It's upholstery material. It's inside-out, though. It's slightly less gaudy on the other side."

* * *

Lionel Richie summed up the appeal of the swag suite pretty succinctly as he strode through: "Free! Free, free, free!"

Richie was among the stars who were "gifted" before the awards show, at a tent outside the Staples Center, where the awards are held. John Legend, Rihanna, Smokey Robinson and James Blunt were among the celebrities who strode through and picked up a wide array of free stuff, including pricey skin-care products, video games, $400 pendants, $300 espresso makers, free passes to Disneyland and stereo systems for iPods.

Rihanna tried on a pair of Chinese Laundry shoes, while Richie picked out a $260 pair of Gucci sunglasses.

Presenters and performers at the Grammys are given $30,000 worth of gifts from Distinctive Assets, while those who pop into the gifting suites can pick up an additional $15,000 in swag. *AP*

LUDACRIS AP

Back to the Bahamas

NASSAU, Bahamas—The waterfront Bahamas mansion where the late Anna Nicole Smith lived with her newborn daughter and her companion has become their home again after the locks were changed twice at the disputed estate.

Anna Nicole Smith's 5-month-old daughter and Howard K. Stern, the man she said was the baby's father, have returned to the gated residence in Nassau, her lawyer Wayne Munroe said Sunday.

Not only is the paternity of the former Playboy Playmate's baby—who could inherit a fortune from Smith's late husband—in question, but so is the ownership of the mansion.

ANNA NICOLE SMITH AP

Smith, who died in Florida on Thursday, had claimed that US developer and former boyfriend G. Ben Thompson gave her the house. But Thompson said he had only lent it to her—and on Friday his lawyer had the locks changed.

Stern had the locks changed the next day and has since returned to the mansion. *AP*

HELEN MIRREN REUTERS

Royal victories—again

LONDON—Royalty reigned at the British film awards on Sunday, with "The Queen" clinching Best Film and Helen Mirren Best Actress for her portrayal of the monarch, while "The Last King of Scotland" scooped three awards.

All eyes were on Mirren as she accepted the mask-shaped trophy at a star-studded Bafta award ceremony at the Royal Opera House.

"I wish I could sing," she said, speaking from a stage normally reserved for operas. *Reuters*

Pitch-perfect Deutsch

BERLIN—Australian actress Cate Blanchett said Friday it was a challenge to learn the pitch-perfect Deutsch she spoke in her romantic thriller "The Good German" but hopes it will spark a trend.

The 37-year-old Oscar-winner said the scenes she had played opposite German actor Christian Oliver became much stronger when she switched into the mother tongue of her character Lena—even if she didn't speak a word beforehand.

"I had done a film that was set in France and part of the problem was when you actually got to France [in the film], no one spoke French," she told reporters at the Berlin Film Festival, referring to "Charlotte Gray."

She said that being forced to speak German in the latest picture, which was filmed in authentic period style, had been a wise decision. "I think it was part of the authenticity of the film, and the modernity of the film because that would not have happened in the 1940s," she said.

Director Steven Soderbergh said he had "sandbagged" Blanchett by telling her at the last minute she would have to speak German. *AFP*

CATE BLANCHETT AFP

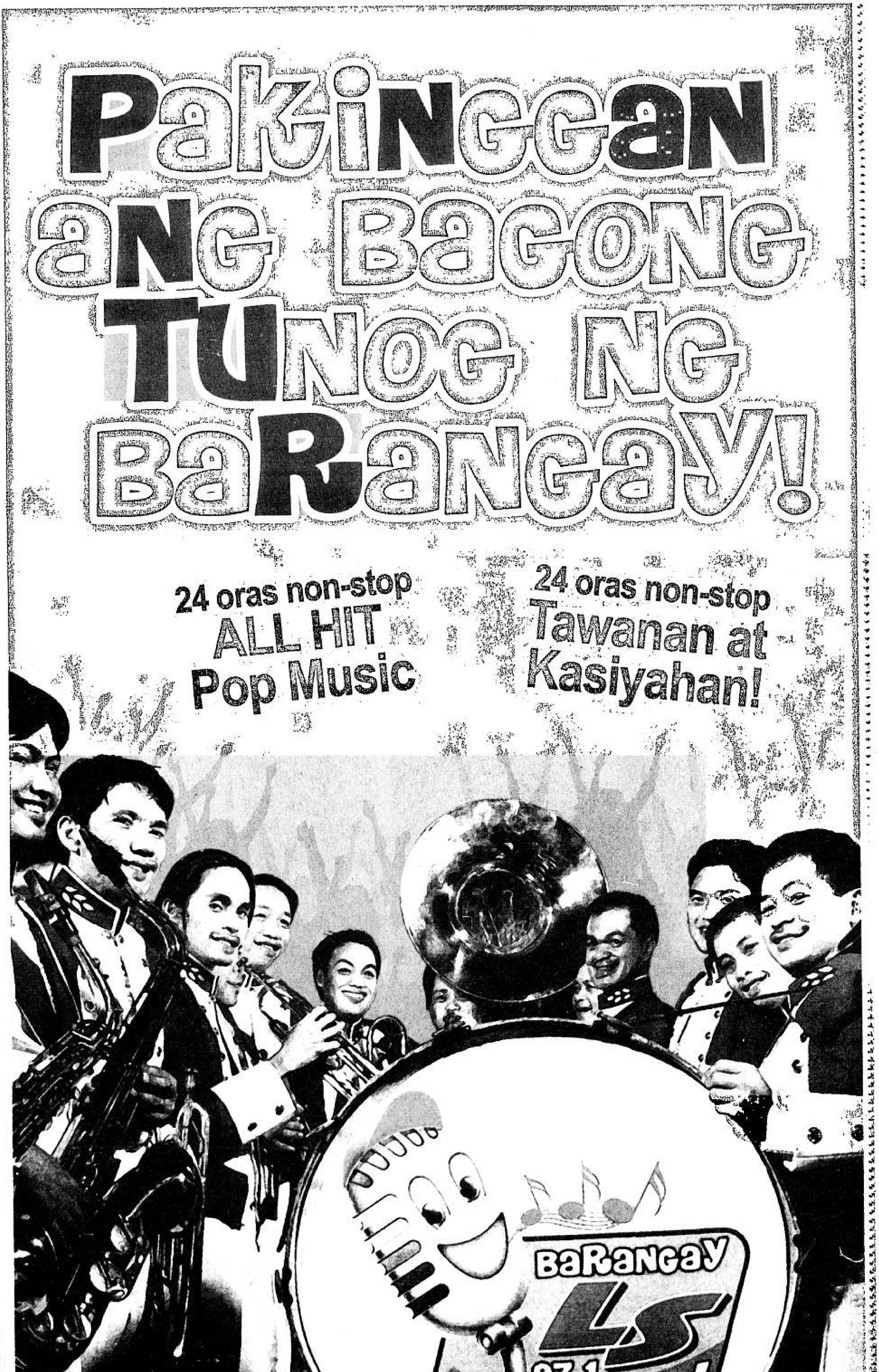
Suicide confirmed

SEOUL—A post-mortem on a South Korean actress found dead last weekend confirmed that she had committed suicide, police said Monday, dismissing suspicions of foul play.

Jeong Hye-sun, 27, whose stage name was Jeong Da-bin, was found hanged at her boyfriend's house on Saturday, police said. He discovered the body and alerted authorities.

Police had initially said that she committed suicide but Jeong's family requested a post-mortem, insisting she had no reason to kill herself.

Jeong acted in several popular Korean television dramas and movies and also found fame in Taiwan two years ago as the Korean pop culture wave spread in Asia. *AFP*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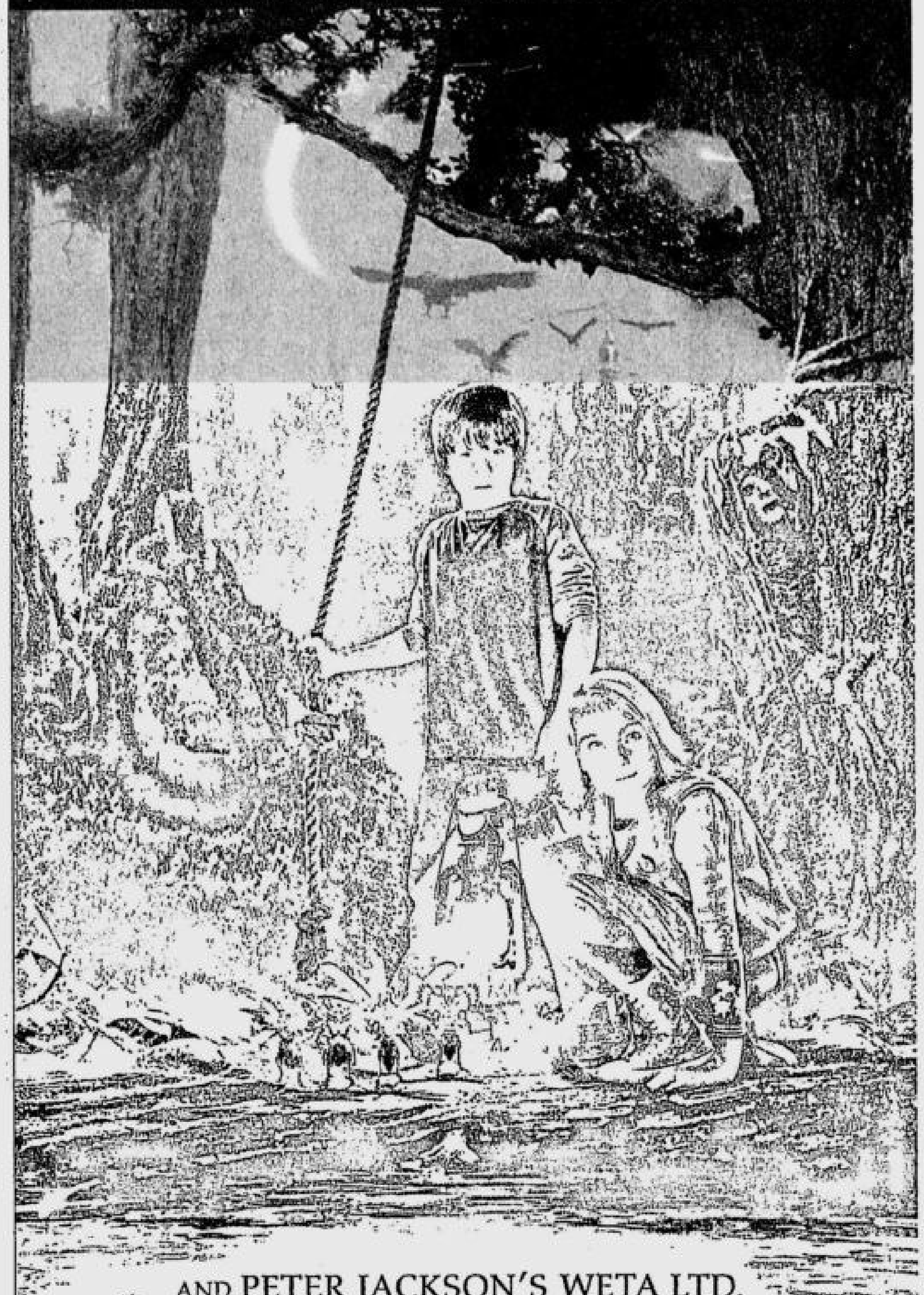

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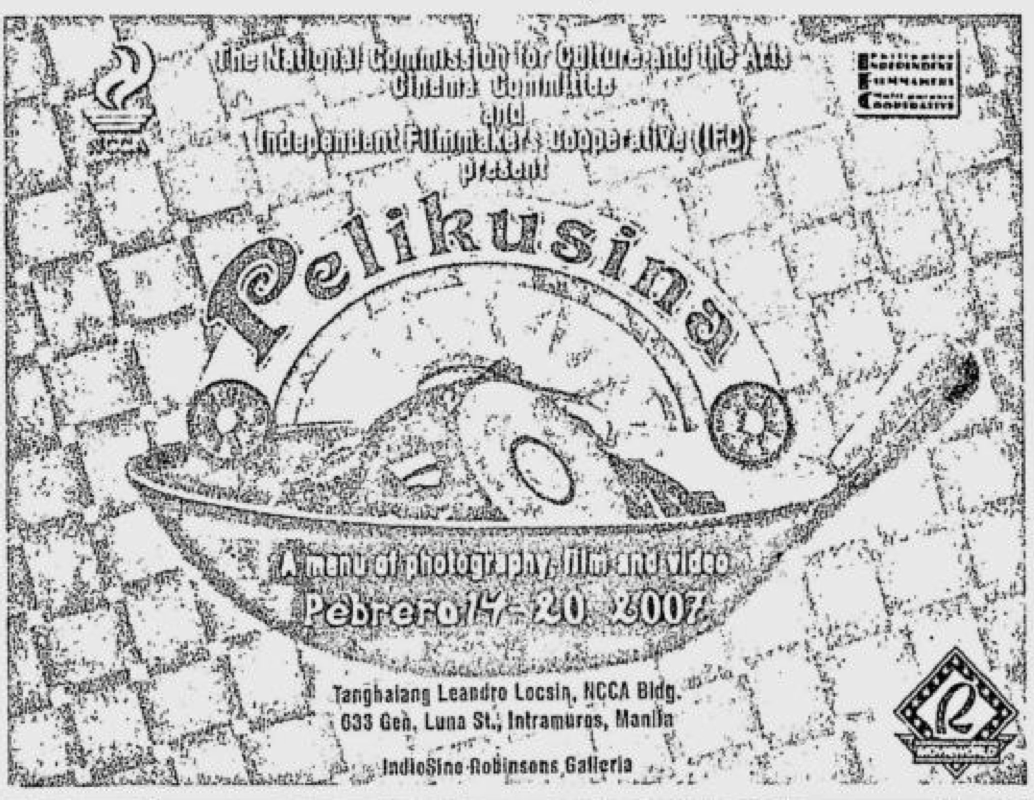

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5:00 / 6:55 / 7:30 / 9:25 / 10:00

THE PROMISE
12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50

MUSIC & LYRICS
12:15 / 2:35 / 4:55 / 7:15 / 9:50

THE FOUNTAIN
1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50

Gateway PLATINUM CINEMA

THE HOLIDAY
12:40 / 3:30 / 6:40 / 9:30

APOCALYPTO
12:40 / 3:40 / 6:40 / 9:40

THE MESSENGERS
1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00

MUSIC & LYRICS
2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00

ALIMALL 5

THE PROMISE
12:10 R4 / 1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30

TROIKA

GHOST RIDER
12:55 / 3:25 / 5:55 / 8:25

THE FOUNTAIN
12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45

MUSIC & LYRICS
1:05 / 3:25 / 5:45 / 8:05

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DID YOU KNOW...

Entertainment highlights during the week of Feb. 11-17:

1950: Disney released the movie "Cinderella."

1961: Frank Sinatra unveiled his own record label, Reprise. Sinatra did not have a very high opinion of rock music, but the label would release recordings by The Beach Boys, Jimi Hendrix and The Kinks.

1965: Singer Nat "King" Cole died of lung cancer in Santa Monica, California. He was 46.

1972: David Bowie first performed as "Ziggy Stardust," at a show in Tollworth, England.

1974: The Captain and Tennille—also known as Daryl Dragon and Toni Tennille—were married in California.

1977: The Police recorded their first single, "Fall Out."

1979: The Clash kicked off its first US tour in New York.

1993: Talk show host Joan Rivers swapped jobs with one of her viewers and worked as a flight attendant on a flight from New York to Pittsburgh. She spilled a drink on a passenger.

1997: Michael Jackson and then-wife Debbie Rowe became parents to a son named Prince.

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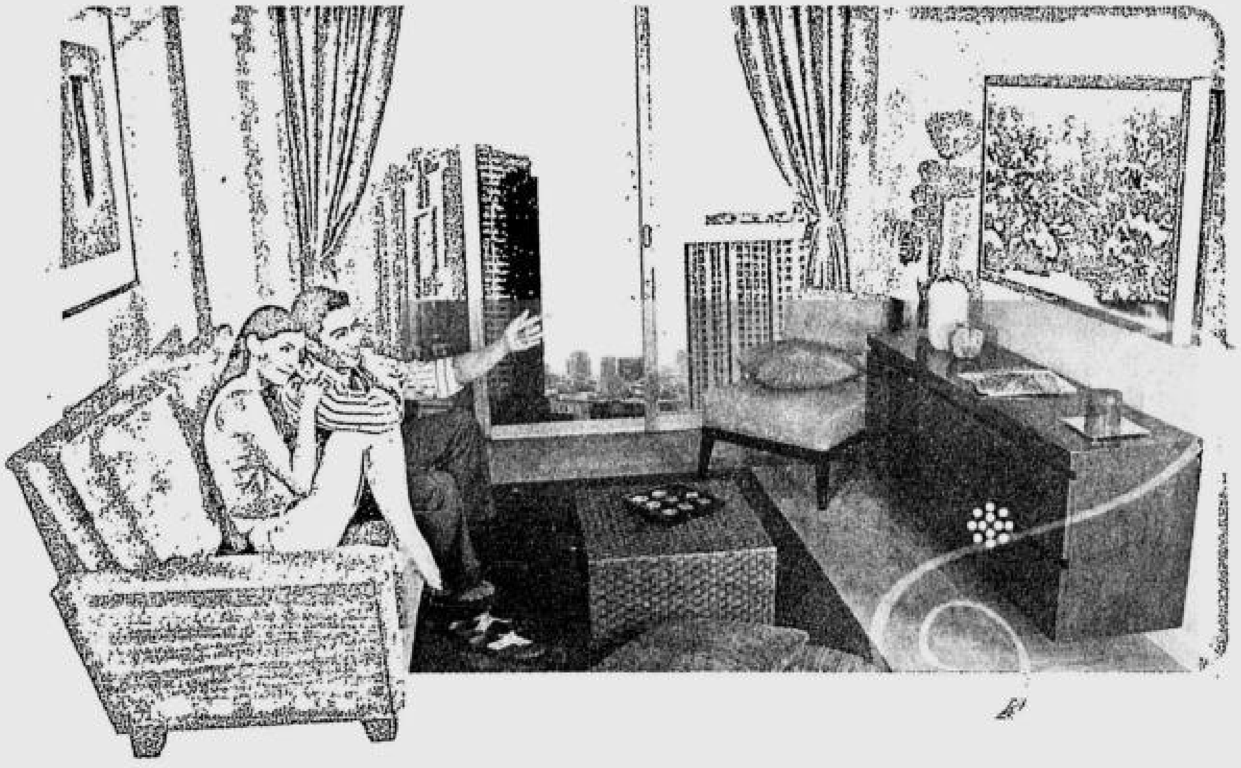

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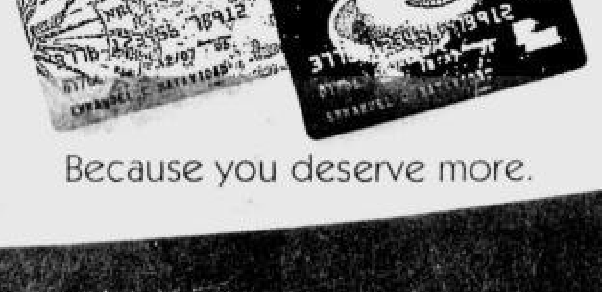

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May I have this dance?

Romantic, fun and engaging, social dancing can actually be a means for couples to bond

DANCE partners and couple Donnabel and Eric Labita

COUPLE Luisita and Alfredo Guerrero dance the night away.

By Raquel P. Gomez

A TYPICAL NIGHT SCENE AT BYKES CAFÉ ALONG Chino Roces Avenue can be likened to popular social clubs of lore, where couples in tight embrace dance to their hearts' desire, swaying to Andrea Bocelli's Besa Me Mucho and Somos Novios. As the night draws to its climax, the house band pipes in more Latin music and the dance floor becomes a sea of dancing couples--an enjoyable sight that can inspire romance even to the hopeless romantics.

Romantic, fun and engaging, social dancing can actually be a means for couples to bond. Dance, after all, is a vocabulary of gestures that express human needs, such as passion or love. Touch and caresses signify tender feelings and emotions run high in the more serious of dances.

Bykes Café regulars Alferdo and Luisita Pimentel, husband and wife who have been dancing as a hobby for many years, say social dancing, aside from the bonding they get out of it, is also an opportunity for them to get some needed exercise and relaxation. Semi retired from work, both love to dance the boogie, swing and cha-cha, dances where both have mastered their moves and rhythm.

"Actually I was the one who have the passion for dance, but my husband got hooked eventually," says Luisita who was raised in a family who loves to dance.

The couple, who are inseparable, as their friends like to describe them, goes to Bykes three or four times a week. "We dance to relax. Before we call it a night we dance to relax."

For dance couple Eric and Donnabel Labita, romance literally happened on the dance floor. Dance Instructors by profession, the couple share that the two of them met when Eric was looking for a dance partner for a sports dance competition. It was instant chemistry, remembers Donnabel, their personalities instantly jelled.

"I was looking for a dance partner but what I got was a life partner. We were no longer able to compete because she already gave birth to our first child," says Eric.

The couple, who used to dance Latin dances and now progressed to the standard dances, have joined a number of dance competitions here and abroad and also have won some awards in dancing. The two, who have been into the dancing scene for 14 years, have three children.

Donnabel says as normal married couples who share the same profession they used to argue about things with regard to their work, but as the years went by the arguments became fewer.

"As a couple, because we both share the same work, we understand each other more. When we practice our dance, I listen more to Eric because he's more experienced than me. Perfection in dance takes a lot of time and practice," says Donnabel.

Bykes Café located nondescriptly at the car showroom strip along Chino Roces Avenue has been becoming a popular venue for couples who love social dancing. Bykes Café was an offshoot of Bykes showroom and store of pricey Italian motorcycles. The café was added to the showroom to accommodate the wives and family members who usually go with the husbands who scout for the big bikes. Eventually, the café started incorporating hobby bands that spawned the social dancing scenario.

"This area was a dead area at night, so we put up a lounge and featured live hobby bands," says Wilfrido Layug of Bykes Cafe. "It came to a point when we were getting more people, with the women and some men dancing to retro music."

To accommodate the burgeoning customers who love to dance, the second floor of the lounge area and the bike showroom area was converted into a dining area and dance studio featuring a 200 square meter space for dancing. The place also offers dance instructors to those who wish to fine tune their dance grooves.

Regulars describe Bykes as a classy hangout with a pleasing profile of clients. "We get a range of crowd here, from the young, hip and the old who loves to social dance. Filipinos are social dancers, they really love to dance."

Movements of Love
Valentine's Day Special

Want to keep the music playing?
Text LOVE to 2222 for FREE
Find the ringback tone that will serenade their hearts.
ang lakas mo sa
Globe

Valentine gifts online

IT'S LOVE SEASON, AND ANYWHERE YOU go, there's no mistaking that it's Valentine's once again. Red heart cutouts, flowers of all sorts, chocolate and praline boxes, balloon arrangements-all are amorous proofs that love is definitely in the air. And what better way to show your love and affection than to wrap it up in one sweet package and have it delivered to your loved ones. But with all the shopping frills, the hustle and bustle of traffic, and those long queues inside the malls, buying that one perfect Valentine's gift becomes a chore. And this isn't so romantic anymore.

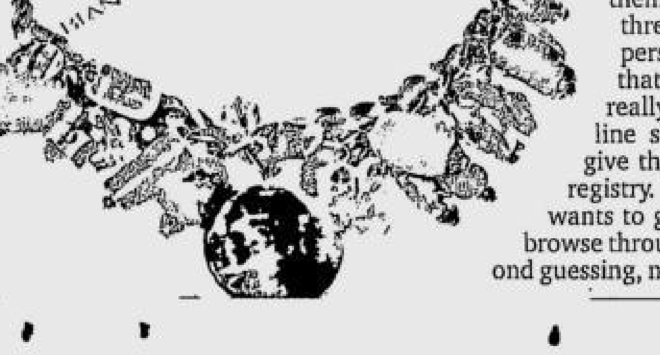
Good thing there's an online shopping website that makes gift-giving special, romantic, and definitely fuss-free: www.RegaloService.com. A quick click to this website brings to you an easier, quicker way of shopping for your special ones this Valentines. Whether it be for a significant other, a friend, a relative an officemate, or somebody you secretly adore, RegaloService.com has an array of very special Valentine gifts that would truly melt anybody's heart. All are trusted brands, so everybody is assured of quality. What's more, some hard-to-find gifts can easily be found in www.RegaloService.com. And unlike ordinary online stores that give one a barrage of knick-knacks and gift what-have-yous, RegaloService.com takes extra effort in making each gift as special as the receiver and the giver.

For Valentine's, one will never go wrong with a dozen red or pink Holland roses in terracotta, a dozen lovely long-stemmed red roses in a rustic basket, or a classic bouquet of roses in sinamay. Another lovely idea is an arrangement of bright colored spring flowers on a vase or with fresh greens in a rattan bag. For a daintier package, one can go with exquisite flower arrangements complete with pastel-colored balloons. Another ultimate heart-warmer is an elegant flower and chocolate display that comes with a cuddly teddy bear. Meanwhile, for those who want to put a bit of a twist to their Vday gift, RegaloService.com also offers pampering gifts like shower gel and aftershave lotion from Caswell Massey, and a Javanese royal bath gift check from The Spa.

To add a bit of romance to these gifts, RegaloService.com has a special signature packaging that is exclusively "regaloservice". Using a very dainty tiffany blue wrapping paper, the package is accentuated with an elegant brown ribbon studded with blue, brown and yellow faux crystals. The effect? Gifts that are heartwarming, astounding and absolutely breathtaking. Exactly what a perfect Valentine's Day gift should be.

RegaloService started only in October 2006 but to date, it has already received an overwhelmingly positive response from its roster of clients who come from different parts of the world. The website design alone is an eye candy, what with its refreshing layout and use of vibrant, dramatic colors. Client service is another plus factor, as RegaloService.com does everything, literally everything that concerns gift giving.

The website offers three major services: First, people can easily shop online, give orders and instructions (e.g. what message to put in the gift tag), and RegaloService.com will quickly procure them the item, prepare the gift as instructed, and have it delivered to the recipient. Second, if the gift that clients would want to give is not in the list, RegaloService.com will source out the product for them and will give them feedback in as short as three days. It's like doing personal shopping for gifts that are personalized and are really hard to find. Third, online shoppers can themselves give their own wish list via gift registry. This way, anyone who wants to give them gifts can easily browse through their wish list. No second guessing, no oops in gift buying.



Saying it sweetly at the Mall of Asia

WITH ITS 150 restaurants, the Mall of Asia will be a great place to celebrate Valentine's Day with that special someone, or with family and friends.

It's a movable feast at the mall with specialty restaurants for intimate dinners, and casual dining outlets for friendly gatherings. And you can indulge after a sumptuous meal with specially prepared desserts. Here are some ways of saying it sweetly at the Mall of Asia.

Bizu literally takes Valentine's Day to heart with specially prepared heart shaped desserts – Romance, tempting layers of dark chocolate ganache, butter cream and moist chocolate cake topped with strawberries and Strawberry Chiboust, a classic French style cheesecake topped with fresh strawberries drenched in light syrup.

Tagaytay Highlands Steakhouse recommends its mouthwatering Meringue Strawberry Walnut Cake, Chocolate Mint Cake and heart shaped Cherry Cheesecake after a sumptuous entrée of their famous prime rib steaks.

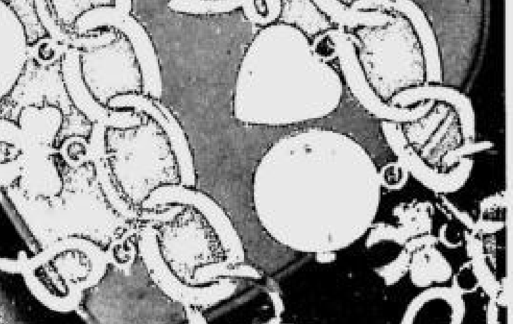
Grappa's Ristorante, which takes pride in its home style Italian recipes suggests its delightful version of Tiramisu, as well as Tartufo Nero, chocolate and milk gelato topped with crunchy choco chips, cherries and whipped cream.

Other just desserts from the Mall of Asia: Gulaghcamun, India's version of our leche flan at the Prince of Jaipur, Oguro Kintoki, an ice cream dessert in pistachio, chocolate and mocha flavor from Tanabe Japanese restaurant; and New Orleans style Bread Pudding topped with Vanilla Ice Cream from Gumbo.

If you like fusion food, try out the Panna cotta at Pink Pepper, the Mexican-Italian resto. Or if you prefer it the all American way, try an old fashioned Banana Split and Kyle's Sundae at Gram's Diner.

The best part is that you can enjoy your Valentine dinner with the best view of scenic Manila Bay. What could be more romantic? Bizu, Tagaytay Highlands Steakhouse, Grappa's Prince of Jaipur, Tanabe, Gumbo, Pink Pepper and Gram's Diner are all located at the Entertainment Mall of the Mall of Asia.

BIZUS romance



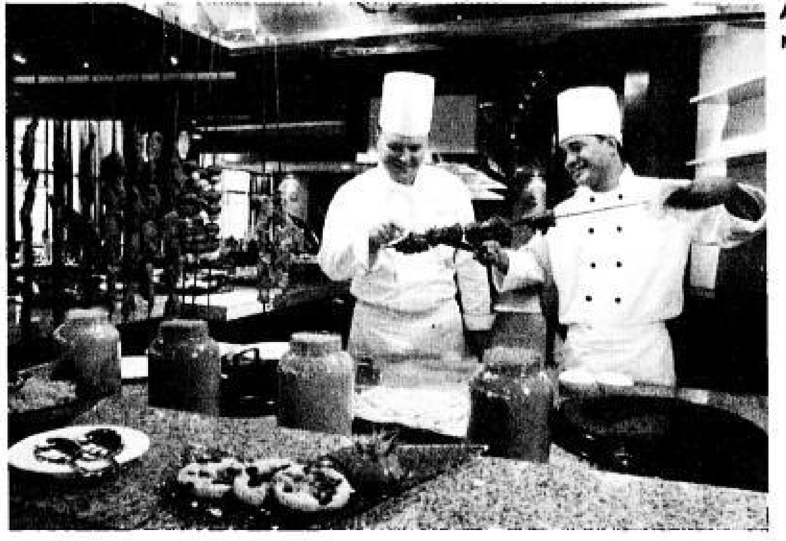
Charming Valentine gifts from Anne Klein

THE MOST GIFT-SENSITIVE OCCASION OF THE year is sounding the alarm for its last two minutes, but given the male species' collective tendency to procrastinate on unpalatable chores such as shopping, it's a good bet that there are still legions out there who are up to now empty handed and clueless on what Valentine gift to give their girlfriends and wives.

Anne Klein, makers of quality ladies' watches puts many a male shoppers' weary mind to rest as it unveils its latest Valentine offering - charm bracelet watches. Available in gold and silver tone, Anne Klein's charm bracelet watch is the perfect Valentine present for ladies who exude that desirable combination of womanly appeal and girlish charm. It features six dangling charms of bows, flowers, and hearts infused with clear crystals and pearlings. Inspired by the classic charm bracelet, the Anne Klein charm bracelet watch is a functional timepiece and a pretty fashion accessory all rolled into one.

Anne Klein watches are exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corporation in leading department stores nationwide.

Everyone enjoys



AT THE Seven Corners restaurant

IN ORDER TO GIVE EVERYONE A chance to enjoy the Valentine's Day celebrations without major challenges, Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila has rolled out its Valentine offers beginning until Feb. 16-so that everyone will have a special day for their own private celebrations.

Starting off with Seven Corners restaurant, the buffet is already prepared by Chefs Cyrille Soenen and Chef Luis Chikiamco with one of the most magnificent feasts you can enjoy in the heart of Ortigas. French Chef Cyrille has planned a buffet that will feature seafood galore-rock lobsters, delicious crabs, prawns, fresh oysters and mussels to your hearts content! Besides seafood, they're already prepping up to serve the best US prime rib steak with all the fixings; Lechon de Leche roasted to perfection and excellent choices of Japanese sushi and sashimi, Tandoori and don't forget your Valentine mainstays-rich, flavorful chocolates and desserts that will make you swoon to euphoria.

Xin Tian Di Chinese restaurant, on the other hand, will feature great Valentine Set Menus ideal for couples or families that wish to celebrate this occasion. Coupled with the on-going Yu Sheng Festival, this celebration will extend to Chinese New Year and through the end of the month.

As for those looking for a bit of relaxation, Crowne Plaza also offers a Valentine room package for only P6,900++ ongoing until Feb. 18. This Lost In Bliss room package is designed to pamper and indulge your romance, as it includes overnight accommodation for two in a spacious deluxe room, complimentary buffet breakfast, complimentary dinner buffet with a bottle of wine for toasting, and 15-percent discount for spa services at Suriya Spa. As an added option, you can pamper yourselves further with a 60-minute Mind & Body Harmony Massage for two persons, for an add-on rate of P1,800++ per couple.

For all guests that visit or check-in at Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila today, the hotel is waiving the entrance fee to the "Funny Valentine" show at barONE which will feature a hilarious comedy band, Arpie & the Multivitamins, to make you smile with your heart! Special prizes are in store at all dining outlets for lucky couples-along with wonderful Valentine giveaways.

Reservations for these promotions can be made by calling 633-7222. Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila is the newest-built luxury hotel in Ortigas Center, located at the corner of Ortigas Avenue and ADB Avenue, directly adjacent to Robinsons Galleria Mall.

It's a date at the Podium

IT'S A TOAST TO LOVE, FRIENDSHIP AND great food as The Podium celebrates Valentine with special treats for two and wine offerings from its specialty restaurants.

Terry's Selection, which has long been known for its exquisite Spanish cuisine and deli items, suggests a dinner of Costillas de Cordero al Vino de la Rojia or Rack of Lamb Cutlets in a red wine sauce; Ensalada de Murcia al Vino y Cecina de Leon, a salad with tomatoes, goat cheese and sherry balsamic vinaigrette and mushrooms served with toast and chorizo bits. All these can be enjoyed with a complimentary glass of Terry Selection wines.

Florabel, another of the mall's gourmet restaurants, recommends romantic dinner highlights: its best selling Crispy Prawn Salad, toasts with its Eaglehawk house wine; and a delightful Strawberry Cheesecake dessert.

Pagliacci, the superb Italian specialty restaurant, offers couples a free bottle of their Italian wines – Montepulciano D' Abruzzo or Vecchia Canlina Querceto Chianti – for every P2,000 purchase on Valentine's Day.

Roma Mia, another of the mall's Italian restos, suggests romantic combinations – Seafood Marinara with its Marco Maci white house wine, and Roast Chicken in Herb Sauce with its Montepulciano D' Abruzzo red house wine.

Casa Armas, the Spanish bistro, recommends a sumptuous celebration: Caesar's Salad, Paella Valenciana, their certified Angus Beef Chuleton Segoviano and Chocolate Decadent Cake with a glass of their house wine, Casa Cervantes.

For those who prefer more casual Valentine celebration, Burgoo, offers its Seafood Caesar Salad and Shrimps and Ribs platter for two with Crane Lake Merlot Red Wine and Chardonnay White Wine, which are available exclusively at Burgoo. Yaku, on the other hand, suggests Japanese specialties for two: Yasai Salad for appetizer, Anakake Tofu or Yaku Platter for the main course and Coffee Jelly for dessert with a glass of Premium Grand Tierra Red Wine and Grand Trillo White Wine.

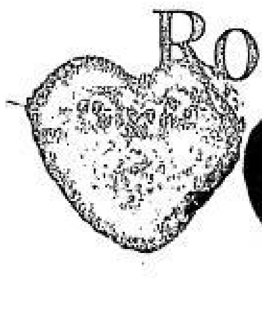
Sitio, the Filipino specialty restaurant, recommends set dinners for two: Set A includes Mixed Seafood Creolo, Cream of Pumpkin Soup, Rice and Sitio Cream Caramel; while set B includes Boullabaisse Soup, Estofadong Lengua, Rice and Ube Ice Cream. Both sets come with Sitio's refreshing Watermelon Shake.

Apart from romantic dinners, you can also say it sweetly with Leonidas Belgian Chocolates. Delightful selections include Forever Embanee Pralines, chestnut based Marron Pralines and assorted pure Liquer Chocolates in Whisky, Mandarin Napoleon, Rhum, Vodka, Armanee Contreau and Four Williams varities.

Other romantic stops at the mall: Bimbo Cerrudo and his singers will serenade mallgoers at the Lounge Area at 6 p.m., while acoustic performances will be highlighted in the Chill Area at 7 p.m.

Terry Selection, Florabel, Pagliacci, Roma Mia, Casa Armas, Burgoo, Yaku, Sitio and Leonidas Belgian Chocolates are located at the Podium in Ortigas Center.

ANOTHER best place to spend an evening with your honey is Roma Mia Italian restaurant. Enjoy its Seafood Marinara with glass of Marco Maci Italian wines.



Romance blooms

EDSA SHANGRI-LA, MANILA'S Valentine's Package includes overnight accommodation in a Garden Deluxe Room where guests are welcomed with a bottle of wine, and chocolate pralines, a known aphrodisiac, providing a perfect nightcap to end a romantic evening. A cozy breakfast for two ordered through room service allows the couple to enjoy a lazy intimate morning together. The Valentine's Package is available for local residents at P7,000++.

For an unforgettable night, guests can indulge in the Deluxe Valentine's Package. The lady will be surprised with a bouquet of roses when the couple is picked up by a chauffeur-driven limousine. Over a bottle of fine wine, the couple can toast to the future in their luxurious Executive Garden Suite Room. The Deluxe Valentine's Package, which also includes pralines, breakfast for two through room service and a Valentine's basket, is available for P18,800++. Both packages are available until Feb. 18.

Today, guests can enjoy "V For Valentine's", a concert in the Lobby Lounge with Vernie Varga and the Akafellas.

Until Feb. 18, Valentine's hampers are available in the bakeshop or in-room upon request, promising a fun evening for couples with goodies both nice and naughty. Guests dining in Heat, Summer Palace, Paparazzi [JWI] or Senju also have a chance to win a pendant from Jewelmer for the entire month of February.

For reservations and inquiries, call Edsa Shangri-La, Manila at 633-8888.

Share a pizza

FOR ONLY P99 PER PERSON, THE NEW PIZza Hut Big Shot Meals lets you and your date savor a tasty pizza meal while enjoying Pizza Hut's classy casual-dining feel and its fast and friendly service. Each meal combination offers a delightful serving of Buddy Pan Pizza-in Hawaiian, Bacon & Cheese, or Pepperoni flavor-plus two glasses of Pepsi and another mouthwatering Pizza Hut product.

"This Valentine's, you won't have to dig deep in your pockets because for just P99 per person, you and your date can enjoy not only a special pizza meal but also a totally satisfying Pizza Hut dining experience," said Pizza Hut VP for marketing Elaine Guzman.

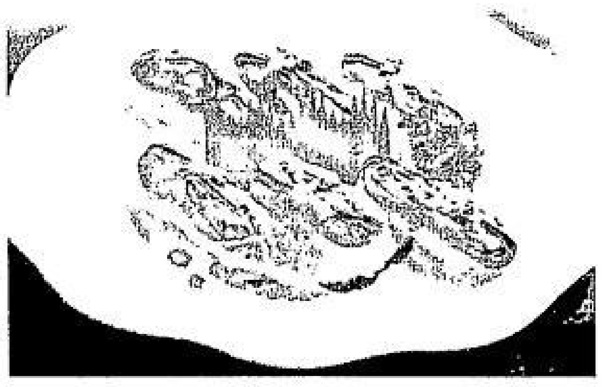
If your date prefers more pizzas, go for Meal 1, which features two servings of Buddy Pan Pizza, garlic bread and two glasses of Pepsi. But if you prefer a heavier rice meal, go for Meal 2 or 4, which comes with a Buddy Pan Pizza, two glasses of Pepsi, and BBQ ribs with rice, or one-piece Roast Chicken with rice. If you're in the mood for pasta, there's Meal 3's Spaghetti Bolognese and garlic bread along with Buddy Pan Pizza and two glasses of Pepsi. And if you like some veggies to go with Buddy Pan Pizza and two glasses of Pepsi, indulge in Meal 5's Caesar Salad and two servings of Mushroom Soup.

The affordable Big Shot Value Meals is available for dine-in.

A heartwarming gift of health

THE MONTH OF LOVE INSPIRES EVERYONE TO celebrate especially with a bottle of robust red wine waiting to be popped. Not only healthy, organic red wine is also heart friendly. Organic wines are free from harmful chemicals and offers healthier, more richly flavored drink. Sumptuous and healthy, organic red wine is absolutely the ideal mate in any special occasion and likewise, the perfect gift for this Valentine's season. Shown is the organic red wine Nuevomundo Cabernet Sauvignon/Malbec 2002, from Chile available at Healthy Options. The organic wines are exclusively available at Healthy Options with stores located at Shangri-La Mall; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati City; Festival Mall, Alabang; Ayala Center, Cebu City; SM City, North Edsa; SM City, Manila; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; SM Megamall B, Edsa Mandaluyong City; SM Pampanga; SM Sta.Rosa, SM Mall of Asia and SM Clark.

Saisaki's seafood of love



VALENTINE'S IS THE DAY WHEN LOVERS AND lovers-to-be exchange love notes and other tokens of affection around the world. But in Japan, where they properly call it St.Valentine's Day, the gift-giving takes on a unique twist. In their case, it's the lady-folk who are the givers, and the guys are the ones to wait to get their chocolate treats. Many women consider the Valentine chocolate spree as a yearly obligation. To male bosses, professors, co-workers, classmates, or relatives the chocolate gift is known as giri-choko, from the words giri (obligation) and choko, a common short version of chokoreto, meaning "chocolate." This contrasts with honmei-choko, the chocolate given to a person someone loves or has a strong relationship with. Friends, especially girls, exchange chocolate that is referred to as tomo-choko. Tomo means "friend" in Japanese. Going with the theme, "Love, Uninterrupted", chocolates in heart-shaped packages will be given to Valentine's Day early diners in all Saisaki restaurants. Ushering in the Valentine week is Saisaki Buffet's Seafood Festival, an endless stream of delicious Japanese cuisine, featuring fresh new recipes and succulent seafood.

In the realm of the senses, seafood is both symbol and source of sensual delights. Lovers of Japanese food will find the all-new seafood selection hard to resist, to name a few, asari, clam soup, nagisa, grilled fish fillet decked with vegetables and home-made mayo; kaisenyori yakimeshi, mixed seafood fried rice, kairui kakeage, clams, mussels & vegetables tempura; ebi furai, breaded prawns; kani korooke, crabstick croquettes, and salmon, which occupies the highest tier in the grand hierarchy of seafood, will be served grilled, broiled, as sushi or sashimi.

Chocolate treats also await early Valentine's Day guests in Kamayan and Dads. Saisaki's Seafood Buffet is priced (VAT exclusive) at P485 and P385 during promo days (with varying sched). Saisaki branches are located in SM Megamall, Glorietta III, Alabang Towncenter, Padre Faura, Edsa, and West Avenue. For inquiries call 722-8125, 528-1723, or 807-5825.

Lux to love at Marionnaud

ITS A LOVE MATCH THIS VALENTINE WITH gifts for that someone special from Marionnaud.

Ranging from scent-sational fragrances to luxurious bath sets, these love token will give one lux to love this Valentine. Check these out at the Marionnaud store at the Second Floor of the Main Mall of the Mall of Asia.

Marionnaud's Fragrance Gift Sets from Lux Asia. This innovative gift set includes samples of six fragrances, which your loved one can try out and then choose a full size fragrance bottle when he or she visits Marionnaud.

The fragrance gift set for him includes must have scents like Bulgari Pour Homme Soir, Issey Mmiyake Pour Homme; Z by Ermengildo zegna; Calvin Klein's Euphoria Men; Davidoff Cool Water; and Bulgari's Aqua Pour Homme. The fragrance gift set for her is a collection of some of the most romantic scents – Bulgari's Omnia Crystalline, Feragammo's Incanto Dream, Feragammo's F, Lanvin Eclat Arpege, Davidoff Echo Woman and Calvin Klein's Euphoria Blossom. The men's set is at P3,299, while the women's set is at P3,749.

Molton Brown Bath Sets. Pamper your loved one with these wonderful and relaxing gift sets.

The men's bath range includes a warming Eucalyptus Bath and Shower Therapy, Cassia Energy Sport Hair and Body Wash, and Cassia Energy Sport Body Spray at P4,780.

The Molton Brown Bath Range for Ladies comes in three delightful sets: Pleasure, Imagine and Inspiring. The Pleasure set will indulge you with the Inspiring Wild Indigo Bath and Shower, Body Lotion, and Body Spray. The Inspiring set is Zen-like with its Heavenly Gingerly Bath and Shower and Body Cream, Invigorating Suma Ginseng Bath and Shower, Relaxing Yuan Zhi Body Cream and Bath and Shower and Recharge Black Pepper Body Wash.

The Relaxing Bath set is everything relaxing and revitalizing: Warming Eucalyptus Bath and Shower Gel, Inspiring wild Indigo Bath and Shower Gel, Recharge Black Pepper Body Wash, Heavenly Gingerly Moisture Bath and Shower, Vitalizing Vitamin AB+C Bath and Shower and Relaxing Yuan Zhi Bath and Shower.

Scents of Love from Guerlain, Burberrym Giorgio Armani, Ralph Lauren, Issey Miyake and Lancome.

As a special Valentine treat, shoppers can take home M's cuddly plush bear for ever P3,900 single receipt purchase from the store. They can also get a free manicure set with any purchase from Marionnaud's exclusive brands. This promotion is ongoing until Feb. 18.

Give your special someone that special gift of love from Marionnaud, located at the Second Level at the Main Mall of the Mall of Asia.

GIVE her the scent of his choice with Marionnaud's Fragrance Gift For Him. Box includes 6 amazing fragrances that you can choose from and a coupon for a full size fragrance bottle when you visit Marionnaud.

Love moves

IF THERE IS A "PERFECT" DESTINATION THIS month of hearts, Seven Suites Hotel Observatory may be the most appropriate. Nestled on the gentle sloping hills of Antipolo, the hotel offers a perfect venue to relax, rewind and rejuvenate. With a magnificent view of the heavens and the city skyline especially at night, Seven Suites is a mere 20 minutes away from Katipunan Avenue, approaching Antipolo from Sumulong Highway.

For the month of February, the hotel is hosting a "Love Moves: A Season of Hearts Special" which will be highlighted with the performance of an acoustic band on Feb. 14, 16 and 17. This month also marks the opening of the Blue Moon Restaurant which will offer guests a special set dinner.

"Fourteen cozy suites, furnished to calm and revitalize, await guests. With the hotel's attentive staff and modern facilities, a quality time perfect for bonding with loved ones is assured," said Jerome Barleta, Seven Suites' hotel manager.

Wake up to a cool morning with a light and refreshing breakfast in bed or try the delightful American-Italian cuisine of the Blue Moon Restaurant.

"It has been said that when a couple sees a blue moon together, they will live happily ever after together. The Blue Moon, the restobar of Seven Suites Hotel Observatory, does just that. Offering a delectable menu and a lovely view of the city skyline, couples are sure to fall in love all over again," said Jerome.

Guests at Blue Moon can partake on a sampling of some mouth-watering meals given a different twist such as the tender Rib-eye, the Puttanesca and the five-cheese Pizza-a union of mozzarella, smoked cheese, aged cheddar, feat and parmesan.

Seven Suites Hotel Observatory also has charming function rooms, open decks and courtyard facilities that can be a perfect venue for various functions. The hotel can host small or large corporate events or even private parties.

A unique Seven Suites feature is the roof deck observatory, where guests can go stargazing with the use of a telescope. After a hectic day of activities, take a breathtaking view of the star-sequined sky, the moon and the planets, or simply the view of the metro lights. An in-house astronomer will make your stay worthwhile with a fascinating lecture about the heavens and trivia about the cosmos.

For inquiries on promos and room reservations, call 396-2051/490-6407/682-0330. E-mail sevensuites@cravingsgroup.com. Seven Suites Hotel Observatory is located at Hollywood Hills Subdivision, Sumulong Highway, Antipolo City.

Romantic interludes

AT FESTIVAL SUPERMALL, THE atmosphere will certainly be romantic and exciting.

Kicking off the love month was a soulful performance from Sofia, with her Bossa Nova renditions Feb. 11, and Sabrina, who will enchant you as she takes center stage on Feb. 18, 3 p.m. at the Carousel Court.

Leggiero String Quarter serenades couples dining at the Chef's Avenue on Feb. 14, who may, before dinner, choose to go through the compatibility and numerology test from well-known tarot readers from "Da Seekers Cove" located at the Treasure Trove. Find out what the cards say about you and your loved one. Sessions shall start at 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

For further information, call the Festival Supermall customer service at 850-3514. Festival Supermall is located at the Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Dinner just for 2

SERVING AUTHENTIC SWISS fare amidst charmingly quaint interiors, the Old Swiss Inn has long been a favorite dining spot. Today, the restaurant has set up the perfect mood and dinner date for love. The Inn offers diners a Valentine's Day set menu package (P1800++ for two persons) composed of scrumptious dishes and an equally luscious dessert.

Valentine's dinner at the Old Swiss Inn's Makati branch starts with Cream of Potato and Leek Soup, followed by a choice of two main courses, Fillet Mignon Avec Sauce Poivre, open fire grilled US beef tenderloin with green peppercorn sauce served with flavored mashed potato, and Steamed Halibut in Nantua Sauce, fillet of halibut steamed in fish fume, garnished with sun-dried tomatoes and sweet roasted bell pepper chiffonade, and accompanied by a glass of either white or red wine. A Toblerone Chocolate Fondue, featuring a choice of milk, white or dark toblerone chocolate served with fresh fruits and buttersponge cake provides a truly sweet ending.

Visit Old Swiss Inn at The Garden Plaza Hotel and Suites, 1030 Belen Street, Paco Manila (521-3002, 526-2739, 522-4835 local 115); at the ground floor, Somerset Olympia, Makati Avenue corner Sto. Tomas Street, Makati City (818-8251, 818-0098, 812-1010 local 511 to 512); and at the 2/F BMW Autozentrum Lounge, Commerce Avenue corner Madrigal Avenue, Ayala Alabang (809-2326).

'Sensual Delight'

ASTORIA PLAZA jazzes up romance in the air with a spa and in-room dining treat that will definitely heat up your rendezvous. Arouse your senses and be stimulated with a unique "Sensual Delight" experience in Astoria's one-bedroom affair for only P5,810++.

Enjoy a private 4-course aphrodisiac-spiced dinner while being pampered by your own butler service and private serenade. Celebrate your special moment with a free bottle of wine and nibble the night away with sinful chocolates as you savor the sensuous spa service.

Promo is ongoing until today.

Astoria Plaza is ideally located at 15 J. Escriva Drive (formerly Amber Avenue), Ortigas Business District, Pasig City. For inquiries, call 687-1111. E-mail sales@astoriaplaza.com, or log on to www.astoriaplaza.com.

Astoria Plaza is managed with distinction by Genesis Hotels & Resorts Corp.

The original Valentine's Day gift

UPON TRACING THE HISTORICAL ROOTS of Valentine's Day, it may come as a surprise that the original gift that lovers gave were not roses, chocolates, or perfume. Rather, they exchanged special cakes.

Hopeless romantics around the world can thank a Roman priest for the celebration of love every Feb. 14. During the mid-200s Emperor Claudius II of Rome banned marriages and engagements due to the difficulty of enlisting soldiers in the military. Valentine, a Catholic priest, secretly married couples despite the emperor's decree. Because he was also an accomplished baker, he made sure to give every bride and groom sugared bread to mark the occasion.

This Valentine's day, you can impress your loved one by giving a delicious cake and explaining the history behind it. A great choice would be the heart-shaped Strawberry Buttercream Cake from Goldilocks. It's a pink colored chiffon cake with vanilla buttercream filling, decorated with multicolored chocolate roses and vermicelli candies. For those who prefer the classic favorites, the country's number one bakeshop also offers heart-shaped versions of its bestselling chocolate and marble cakes. These cakes are the perfect gift for the perfect someone.

European dishes at the Julius Maggi Kitchen

CELEBRATE THE MONTH OF LOVE IN THE convenience of your own home! This February, the Julius Maggi Kitchen (JMK) will showcase dishes from France, Switzerland and Italy in a series of cooking demos dubbed "European Rendezvous". Attend the activity and JMK's featured chef will show you how to create a special yet inexpensive dinner for two or for the whole family.

To complement the "European Rendezvous" demo, JMK is treating all attendees to an extended cooking demo on "Cool Coffee Concoctions" where you'll learn how to mix coffeehouse hot and cold beverages using Nescafe, Coffee-Mate and Nestle milks.

This year, the Julius Maggi Kitchen continues to offer raffles and promos for Nestlé Club members! Be the first to arrive with the most number of friends who are not yet members and win exciting prizes in the Member-Get-Member (MGM) Promo. All members may also join the Lucky Member Raffle. An activity exclusive for current Nestlé Club members, My Best Nestlé Recipe lets you share your very own specialty recipe using any Nestlé product/s for a chance to present it in the next cooking demo! Submit your entries complete with your name, address, contact numbers, e-mail, and photo to Nestlé consumer services via e-mail at Consumer.Services@ph.nestle.com, fax 897-0987, or hand mail to consumer services, Nestlé Center, 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati City.

These free cooking demos and lifestyle lectures for new and old Nestlé Club members will be held on Feb. 15, 17, 20, 22 and 24 from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Julius Maggi Kitchen, ground floor of the Nestlé Center, 31 Plaza Drive Rockwell Center, Makati City. A session reserved for current Nestlé Club members will be held on Feb. 27 from 2 to 5 p.m. Make your reservations by calling 727-4137 or 0916-7088013.

The Nestlé Club will also hold a paying class dubbed "European Pastries and Desserts" on Feb. 28 from 2 to 5 p.m. For only P400, be part of a group hands-on baking class and learn to make puff pastry and pâte à choux for a variety of well-loved European pastries like napoleons, palmiers, croquembouche, and profiteroles. You can also master the tricks of making successful soufflés and charlotte russe!

LIKE A
FESTIVAL OF MALLS
ONLY AT
FESTIVAL SUPERMALL
FILINVEST-ALABANG

Romantic Interludes

Rhythm of Love
February 11 & 18
Fall in love as Sofia and Sabrina
do Bossa Nova renditions
of your favorite love songs
in a special Valentine concert
at the 2/L Carousel Court.

Love Match
February 11, 3pm - 5pm
2/L Carousel Court
February 14, 5pm - 7pm
3/L Chef's Avenue
A 500-single receipt minimum purchase
at any restaurant in Chef's Avenue,
Festival Walk, Greens & Grills, C-Square
and Food Junction entitles you to avail of
a compatibility test & numerology.
Receipts must be dated Feb. 11 & 14 only.
[illegible]

Romantic Strings
February 14, 2007, 6pm
3/L Chef's Avenue
On Valentine's Day enjoy a romantic date
at any Chef's Avenue restaurant
and be serenaded by the
Leggiero String Quartet.

To make sure love is in the air, little cupids
will be giving away heart-shaped balloons
along Chef's Avenue, C-Square, Greens &
Grills and Food Junction on Feb 14.

FILINVEST
INVEST ON SOLID GROUND

'Pleasure, indulgence, and romance at the Century Park Hotel'

Fill your heart with gladness and memorable memories with your special someone on Valentine's Day, as Century Park gives everyone irresistible choices to celebrate the occasion

FOR ONLY P1,800 NET, COUPLES WILL SURELY BE delighted in the especially created five-course dinner available at Café in the Park, Atrium Lounge, and Top of the Century, carefully concocted by the award-winning executive chef Rudy Velasco. Whet your appetite as you start off the meal with Romeo and Juliet Fantasy, which includes tempting Roulade of Pink Salmon and Yellow Fin Tuna with Dou of Sauces, served with Mesclun and Pomelo Salad with Red Beets Dressing. Have a sweet warm up with Valentino's Dream Soup that has Cappucino of Roasted Red Capiscum with Chantily Cream Float, which is followed by Gigolo's Favorite. It is a perfect fusion of U.S. Fillet Mignon of Beef Over Baked with Foie Gras, served with Mousseline Potato, Asparagus Spears, Cherry Tomato, and Pink Peppercorn Sauce. Another option is the Surfer's Desire, a Pan Seared Salmon Fillet "Mediterranean Style", served with Roasted Bell Peppers, and Olive Basil Sauce. The luscious combination of Apricot Cheese Cake and Strawberry Milleuille with Mint Sauce called as Sweets Symphony is surely a satisfying finale to your meal, together with a warm cup of coffee or tea. Pralines are also a scrumptious pair. Making the day extra meaningful is a personally hand-painted handkerchief for the ladies courtesy of Professor Arnold Esguerra. A special lunch and a dinner buffet menu are also offered at P950++ for adult and P550++ for children, aged four to twelve years. Be sure to try the indulging Pan-Fried Boneless Chicken on Creamy Paprika Noodles with Chives, Steamed Whole Garoupa with Spinach and Crab Meat Sauce, Pork Spareribs with Spicy Hoisin Sauce and Cilantro, Squid and Salmon Casserole with Green Asparagus Speaks, with more choices from Cold, Salad, Soup, Carving, and Dessert stations.

The combined culinary talents of Japanese consultant Yuseke Katayama, executive Japanese chef Shinji Furukawa, teppanyaki chef Kamura Seiji Kamijo, and sushi chef Yamazaki Seiko will transport you into an exciting celebration with Century Tsukiji's Valentine Menu.

Formerly Unsui, the restaurant gets an upgrade with exciting selections of authentic Japanese specialties, an assurance that all ingredients are directly coming from Japan. For only P2,500+++, the delightful set meal which is good for two persons starts off with Flower Style of Tuna and Salmon, Dobin Mushi, Kani Salad, Unagi Kabayaki, U.S. Saikoro Steak and Vegetables, Strawberry Ice Cream, and a thirst quenching Strawberry Shake.

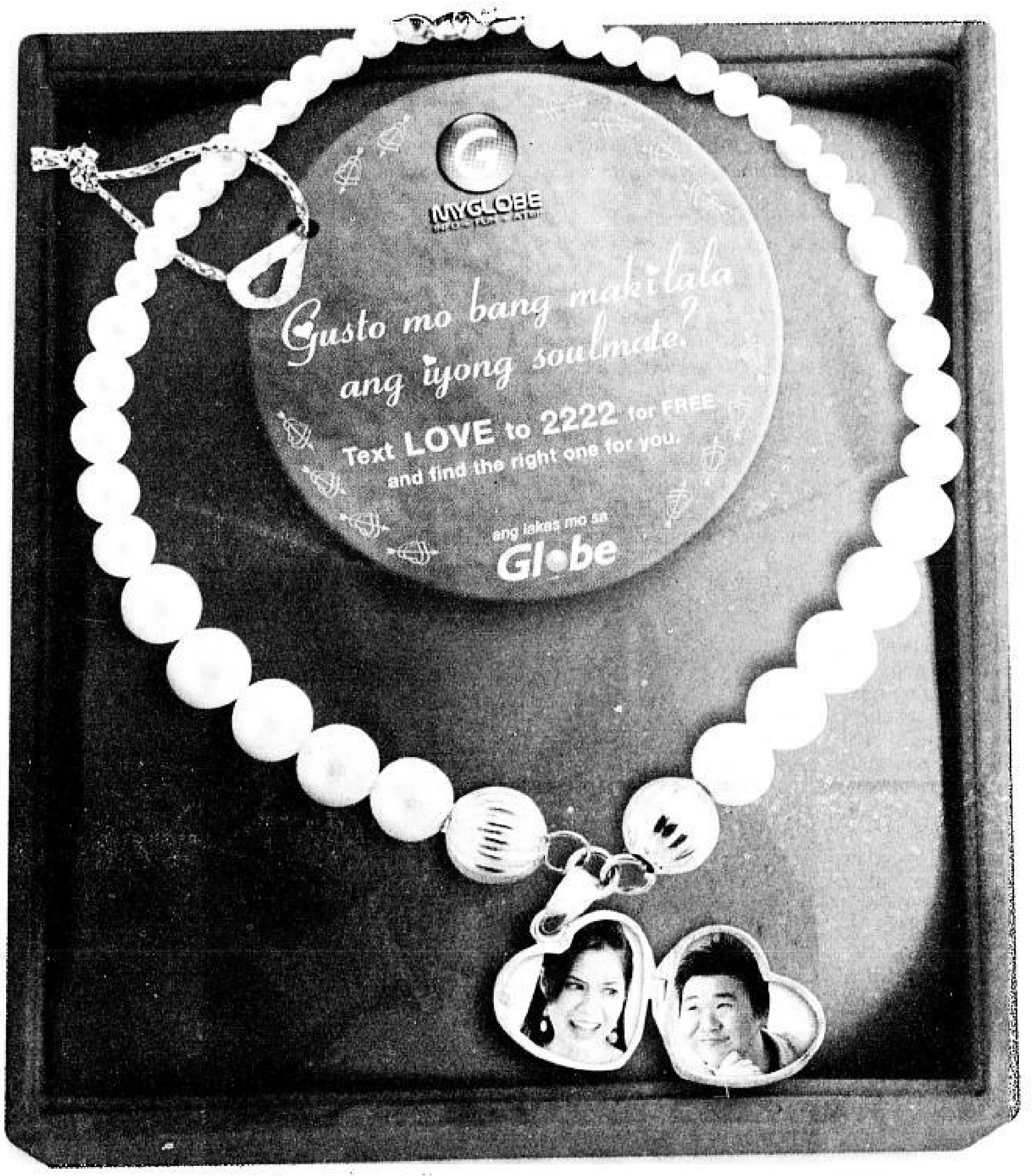
The Top of the Century offers a thrilling mood for romance with a live piano entertainment with a theme Wine and Dine Your Night Away. The serene and intimate ambiance at the 19th floor is a perfect venue for friends, family, or with someone special while enjoying a sumptous five-course dinner, conversing, and unwinding starting Feb. 12 to 16. Ladies get a heart-shaped chocolate and a free glass of sparkling red or white wine to the diners. The Primetime Entertainment (9 p.m. to 1 a.m.) on Feb. 14 is only P700+++ per person. Get a chance to win any of the three paintings of the artists of Open Artist Theme, which is on every Monday night. On the other days of the Valentine week, a minimum of only P450 net per person applies.

While the Atrium Lounge whips up an amour escape from the hustle and bustle of the city beginning 5:30 p.m. with the Century Strings Ensemble. At 9:30 p.m., "A Night of Music at the Atrium Lounge", with Anne Castro and Pianist Bobby Cabral will let you dance the night away for only P500 net per person, with your choice of glass of sparkling red or white wine, and standard cocktail drink. Ladies also get a hand-painted handkerchief.

Make your loved one feel extra special by bringing home a luscious gift from Deli Snack. Pinacolada, Strawberry Lemon Cheesecake, Soybean Mango Bread, Heart Shaped Cake, and Chocolate Praline Box are just some of the best choices from Pastry Chef Romy Reodique. While for the cold cuts, try out the Cabalen con Chorizo and Pork of the Year Terrine, a special recipe of Butcher Master Teddy Barro. Valentine's Day special cakes and chocolates are offered from Feb. 9 to 15.

For inquiries and reservations, please call (632) 528-8888 or email information@centurypark.com.ph

The Century Park Hotel is owned and operated by Maranaw Hotels and Resort Corporation.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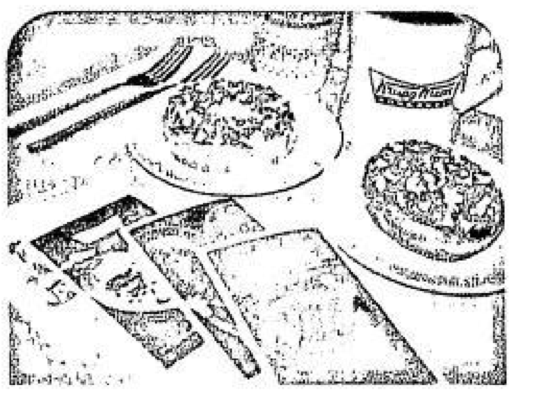


1ST RP VALENTINE

Krispy Kreme, America's most loved doughnut, tops off its first heart's day in the Philippines with four variants of Krispy Kreme's heart-sprinkled doughnuts set to capture every sweet tooth's fancy until Feb. 28 - Chocolate Strawberry Filled with Sprinkles, Cream Cheese Strawberry Filled with Sprinkles, Chocolate Iced with Sprinkles and Cream Cheese with Sprinkles. For every purchase of a dozen assorted with the featured doughnuts, one gets four Valentine cards that go with free doughnut coupons, which they could give away to family and friends. Krispy Kreme is located at the Bonifacio High Street at Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City, and at the ground floor of SM Megamall Building B.

Romantic rendezvous

INDULGE IN A ROMANTIC GETAWAY THIS Valentine's Day at The Sulo Hotel. Share the lovely evening with your special someone in one of the cozy rooms, and take pleasure from the delectable candlelit dinner for two at Café Paraiso or Sushi Bar & Teppanyaki.

As main course for the candlelit dinner, a couple may choose between Beef Tournedos topped with Liver Mousse and Port Wine Sauce, or Salmon Fillet with Caviar Sauce at the Café Paraiso. While the Sushi Bar & Teppanyaki offers Gindara Nitzuke with Potato Croquette, or Kabayaki with Breaded Chicken. All meals are complete with appetizers, soup, desserts and complimentary servings of Strawberry Cheesecake. The set dinner for two comes in a budget-friendly price of only P1,100++.

Furthermore, room package is complete with amenities and inclusive of romantic set dinner and breakfast for two for as low as P2,900 net.

For inquiries and reservations, call 924-5051 to 71 or log on to www.sulohotel.com.ph.

Have a luscious Valentine with Lush

WHY JUST SAY IT WITH FLOWERS, WHEN YOU can declare your love to the world with chocolate candy? This Valentine's Day, set the romantic mood with a little chocolate-filled candy surprise that your partner will really love: Lush Choco Chews! There's no better way to say "I love you" than with Lush's rich chocolate filling embraced by its sweet taffy exterior. It's a delightful combination that's bursting with chocolate goodness with each chewy bite, making for an excellent Valentine's gift that's sure to win hearts. Give the gift that says it all this Valentine's Day. Nothing says it better than Lush Choco Chews. Say it with love... Say it with Lush.

Greenwich takes pizza delivery to the next level

DINE IN OR TAKE OUT? IT'S A COMMON question that we are always asked whenever we enter our favorite restaurant and begin to order. There are times, we'd rather eat our favorite meals in the comfort of our homes. That's why Greenwich thought of going the extra mile for its customers by providing a special twist to its delivery service.

When it comes to fast and guaranteed on-time pizza deliveries, Greenwich Pizza continuously comes up with a truly unique way of delivering our favorite pizza and pasta to our homes. Recently, Greenwich has adopted the number 5-55-55 to back up its garantisado on time delivery promise.

This means that if Greenwich delivery is late, the customer does not have to pay for the order and will also get a gift certificate of the same value that was ordered. Greenwich Delivery service has the widest pizza network nationwide from as far north as Tuguegarao to Zamboanga down south.

Now they have the Greenwich DeliveReach service that allows customers to order from any of their more than 200 stores and have them delivered anywhere in the Philippines where Greenwich delivery is available.

The said delivery service is simply perfect for those occasions when you want to surprise your loved ones with a Greenwich treat, especially this Valentine's Day. For a minimum order of P200, customers can simply go to any Greenwich store, place and pay for their orders, and their orders will be delivered by the assigned Greenwich delivery store that serves their recipients' delivery address. This delivery feature is a permanent service offer from Greenwich, which can be availed by customers starting this February.

"Greenwich DeliveReach is another innovation which only goes to show how confident we are with our nationwide delivery system. We have a commitment to our customers that every order is delivered completely, accurately and on-time," Greenwich point of access manager Luis Velasco III said.

Happy Feet's 'Happy Hearts' sale

ENJOY 30-PERCENT DISCOUNTS on selected Happy Feet Sandals this February. Riana sandals come in delicious fruity colors that are perfect for the coming summer. Marizza Limited Edition sandals, on the other hand, have straps that are made of genuine designer leather.

And when it says limited edition, it means those as rare as only 9 pairs were made, making them very unique. The Roberta Glide Sandals look girly with the swirly patterns on the footbed. These health-rated sandals are perfect for your feet because they are designed to support all those precious parts of your feet while keeping you hip and in style.

Happy feet health-rated sandals have biomechanically designed footbeds that give the body utmost orthopedic support, making them less prone to backaches and other health ailments.

But if shoes are what you love, then indulge yourself because the Mia Hot Flats are also on sale for 30 percent off! Made of cotton fabric with full leather lining, the Hot Flats come in a wide array of fun and funky designs.

And if you're happy with expanding your strap collection, be happier this time because the straps are on sale too!

Happy Feet sandals also make great gifts this Valentine's Day, so grab them while they're on sale. Happy Feet Sandals are available in Happy Feet stores at San Juan (Wilson corner P. Guevarra (726-5393), Robinsons Place Cainta (ground floor, 656-8028), Pavillion Mall in Biñan, Laguna (049-4113181), Robinsons Galleria (3rd Floor, 633-2739), Festival Supermall in Alabang and University Mall in Taft Avenue (411-3181). In Cagayan, call 0917-5229115, in Davao/Cebu call 0918-9251168 and in Bacolod call 0917-8871171. Happy Feet sandals are also available at leading SM Department Stores. E-mail queries@happyfeetsandals.com for inquiries. Promo is ongoing until Feb. 28.

30% off
Straps
Roberta Glide
Riana
Mia Hot Flats
Marizza Limited Edition
Get 30% off on these selected Happy Feet products!
Riana, Roberta Glide and Marizza Limited Edition Sandals
Mia Hot Flats
Extra Straps
Happy Feet

Strengthening ties this Valentines with Fresher

VALENTINES DAY IS AN OPPORTUNE TIME to express love and concern for your special someone but the season of hearts is not strictly for couples. It can be enjoyed with all the other special people around you. In this light, Valentines in essence is all about celebrating relationships, relationships that can help us through both good and bad times.

Just the thought that someone is there to listen and share in whatever we're feeling can be so comforting be it your boyfriend, family or peers. That's what closeness is all about, being able to share and experience all the ups and downs of life together.

Perhaps this is the reason why young people value their close relationships so much. These are the people who are your family outside of the home, the people who know almost everything about you!

Fresher, Lamoiyan Corporation's new feminine wash understands what you need to stay close. Fresher keeps you feeling fresh and clean smelling the whole day, especially on those days when you have your monthly period. No matter what activity you get into, your confidence level to keep "close" will never dip because Fresher makes sure you're smelling and feeling clean the whole day! It is surely your reliable companion in keeping all the close relationships you've made. Fresher will make people always want to be close to you, even on days when you're not in the best mood.

Unlike other feminine washes in the market, Fresher has a special cooling agent that provides a cool and fresh feeling, keeping you comfortable and confident during those days because you're sure you are clean! Best of all Fresher is so much more affordable than the other brands, leaving you more to spend on other fun things to do with friends this Heart's Day.

Available in 60ml. and 150ml. bottles, Fresher Hypoallergenic Feminine

Wash comes in three variants: Fresh Bouquet, Fresh Miss and Fresh 'n Pure (unscented). Grab a bottle in leading supermarkets and drug stores nationwide. Keep close this Valentines.

Movements of Love
Valentine's Day Special

Love quotes for all seasons

By Joel V. Nigos

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE MAY NOT HAVE AN inkling that centuries after he had written his now famous plays and poems, a lot of quotes from his works would form some of literature's most celebrated lines.

His works encompasses various genres-from comedies to tragedies, to epic history and romance. But it is in his romance plays where his quotes would be most well-known.

Who would forget "O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?" in the tragic romance Romeo and Juliet and "Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind" in Midsummer Night's Dream?

This Valentine season, let's have a look at some of those sappy love lines from Shakespeare and other equally famous writers and people-from Plato to Vincent van Gogh, to Robert Frost and Alfred Lord Tennyson-immortalizing that crazy little thing called love.

But we should not also miss that the all-time best-selling book, the Bible, and those celebrated date movies also have their take on love.

So if you haven't written anything in those Valentine cards which you are going to give to your loved ones today, take a read, you may find inspiration from the following love quotes.

Famous Love Quotes:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

"Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away." - *1 Corinthians 13:4-9*

"Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom. - William Shakespeare *(Sonnet CXVI)*

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date." - *William Shakespeare (Sonnet 18)*

"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, and therefore is winged Cupid painted blind." - *William Shakespeare (A Midsummer Night's Dream)*

"Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow, that I shall say good night till it be morrow." - William Shakespeare *(Romeo and Juliet)*

"But love is blind, and lovers cannot see." - William Shakespeare *(The Merchant of Venice)*

"Love sought is good, but giv'n unsought is better." - *William Shakespeare (Twelfth Night)*

"At the touch of love everyone becomes a poet." - *Plato*

"I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love." - *Mother Teresa*

"We come to love not by finding a perfect person, but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly." - Sam Keen

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched-they must be felt with the heart." - *Helen Keller*

"Love doesn't make the world go 'round. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile." - *Franklin P. Jones*

"Love is a friendship set to music." - *E. Joseph Cossman*

Love is something eternal...
The aspect may change,
But not the essence - *Vincent van Gogh*

"Other men have seen angels, but I have seen thee, and thou art enough." - *G. Moore*

"Love is missing someone whenever you're apart, but somehow feeling warm inside because you're close in heart." - *Kay Knudsen*

It is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have love at all - *Alfred Lord Tennyson*

I don't want to live-
I want to love first,
And live incidentally. - *Zelda Fitzgerald, letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald, 1919*

To love is not to look at one another,
But to look together in the same direction - *Antoine de Saint-Exupery*

"Love grows by giving. The love we give away is the only love we keep. The only way to retain love is to give it away." - *Elbert Hubbard*

"You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments when you have really lived, are the moments when you have done things in a spirit of love." - *Henry Drummond*

"All love that has not friendship for its base, is like a mansion built upon the sand." - *Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

Le coeur a ses raisons
Que la raison ne connait point.
(The heart has its reasons,
Whereof reason knows nothing.) - *Blaise Pascal*

All's fair in love and war. - *Francis Edward Smedley*

Where we love is home,
Home that our feet may leave,
But not our hearts - *Oliver Wendell Holmes*

Absence is to love
What wind is to fire;
It extinguishes the small,
It enkindles the great - *Roger De Bussy-Rabutin*

Love at the lips was touch
As sweet as I could bear;
And once that seemed too much;
I lived on air - *Robert Frost (from the poem "To Earthward")*

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup
And I'll not look for wine. - *Ben Jonson (from the poem "Song to Celia")*

"Some of us think holding on makes us strong; but sometimes it is letting go." - *Herman Hesse*

Best movie love lines:

"Don't forget. I'm just a girl standing in front of a boy...asking him to love her." - *Notting Hill*

"You complete me." - *Jerry Maguire*

"If I should die this very moment, I wouldn't fear. For I've never known completeness like being here, wrapped in the warmth of you, loving every breath of you. Why live life from dream to dream?" - *Moulin Rouge*

"I love this spot. It's like heaven. Right here on earth. Maybe that's what heaven is. Maybe we go through life collecting people and places we love, and they become our heaven." - Here on Earth

"Some things are true whether you believe in them or not." - *City Of Angels*

"When you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible." - *When Harry Met Sally*

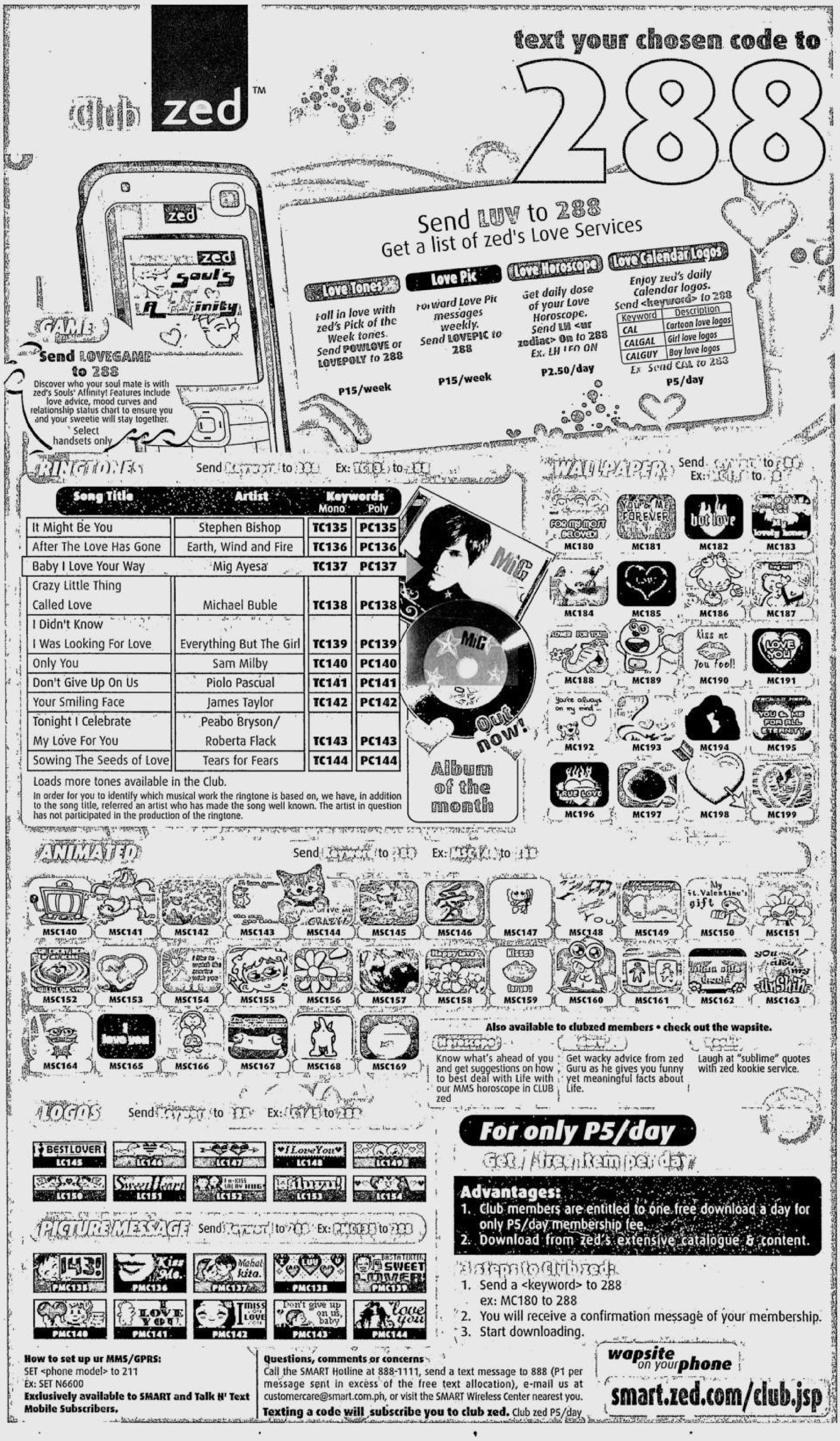
"Find someone who you can love like crazy and who'll love you the same way back. You have to try, because if you haven't tried, you haven't lived." - Meet Joe Black

"Can't fall in love? But a life without love, that's terrible." - *Moulin Rouge*

"I would rather be a ghost, drifting by your side, as a condemned soul, than enter heaven without you. Because of your love, I will never be a lonely spirit." - *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon*

"Why can't I quit you." - *Brokeback Mountain*

QUOTES/K2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Select handsets only

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Song Title	Artist	Keywords Mono	Keywords Poly
It Might Be You	Stephen Bishop	TC135	PC135
After The Love Has Gone	Earth, Wind and Fire	TC136	PC136
Baby I Love Your Way	Mig Ayesa	TC137	PC137
Crazy Little Thing Called Love	Michael Buble	TC138	PC138
I Didn't Know I Was Looking For Love	Everything But The Girl	TC139	PC139
Only You	Sam Milby	TC140	PC140
Don't Give Up On Us	Piolo Pascual	TC141	PC141
Your Smiling Face	James Taylor	TC142	PC142
Tonight I Celebrate My Love For You	Peabo Bryson/ Roberta Flack	TC143	PC143
Sowing The Seeds of Love	Tears for Fears	TC144	PC144

Loads more tones available in the Club.
In order for you to identify which musical work the ringtone is based on, we have, in addition to the song title, referred an artist who has made the song well known. The artist in question has not participated in the production of the ringtone.

Out now! Album of the month

WALLPAPER Send [illegible] to [illegible] Ex: [illegible] to [illegible]
MC180 MC181 MC182 MC183 MC184 MC185 MC186 MC187 MC188 MC189 MC190 MC191 MC192 MC193 MC194 MC195 MC196 MC197 MC198 MC199

ANIMATED Send [illegible] to [illegible] Ex: [illegible] to [illegible]
MSC140 MSC141 MSC142 MSC143 MSC144 MSC145 MSC146 MSC147 MSC148 MSC149 MSC150 MSC151 MSC152 MSC153 MSC154 MSC155 MSC156 MSC157 MSC158 MSC159 MSC160 MSC161 MSC162 MSC163 MSC164 MSC165 MSC166 MSC167 MSC168 MSC169

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Get wacky advice from zed Guru as he gives you funny yet meaningful facts about Life.
Laugh at "sublime" quotes with zed kookie service.

LOGOS Send [illegible] to [illegible] Ex: [illegible] to [illegible]
LC145 LC146 LC147 LC148 LC149 LC150 LC151 LC152 LC153 LC154

PICTURE MESSAGE Send [illegible] to [illegible] Ex: PMC138 to 288
PMC135 PMC136 PMC137 PMC138 PMC139 PMC140 PMC141 PMC142 PMC143 PMC144

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Love quotes for all seasons

From page K1

"Love itself is what is left over after being in love has burned away." - *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*

"Kiss me. Kiss me as if it were the last time." - *Casablanca*

"I would rather have had one breath of her hair, one kiss from her mouth, one touch of her hand, than eternity without it." - *City of Angels*

"A heart can be broken; but it keeps beating just the same." - *Fried Green Tomatoes*

"Without a heart I can never really know what it would be like to love someone, or ever really understand trashy novels." - Wizard of Oz

"I am someone else when I'm with you, someone more like myself." - *Original Sin*

"Love means never having to say you're sorry." - *Love Story*

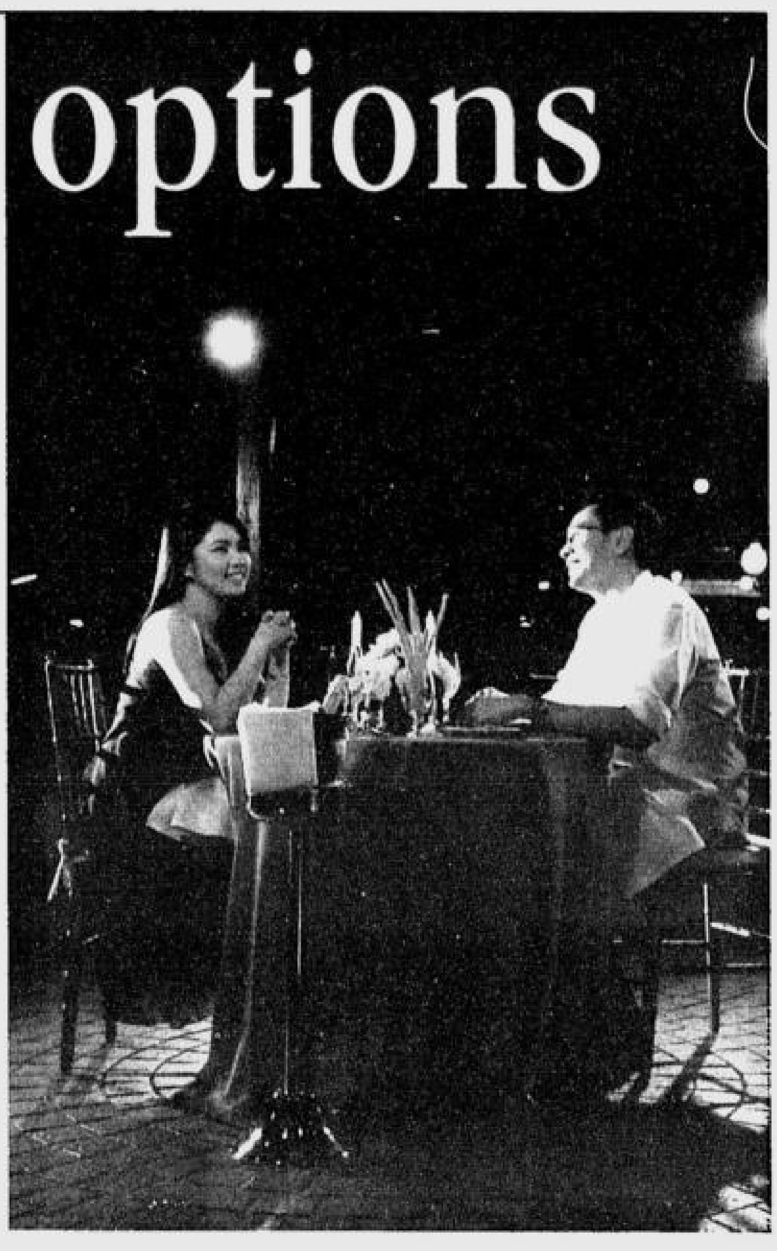
"He was like an angel, you know? I never knew life could be like that. He was the one thing I followed through in my life, the one thing I didn't give up on. I was good at loving him." - *The Untamed Heart*

"Take love, multiply it by infinity and take it to the depths of forever. And you still have only a glimpse of how I feel for you." - *Meet Joe Black*

"You know, that moment when you kiss someone and everything around you becomes hazy. And the only thing in focus is you and that person. And you realize that that person is the only person that you're supposed to kiss for the rest of your life. And for one moment you get this gift. And you want to laugh and you want to cry because you feel so lucky that you found it and so scared that it will go away all at the same time." - *Never Been Kissed*

"If you die, I'll hold your hand. And the last person you'll see would be me. Because I love you." - *Dying Young*

Romantic options



THE NEWLY REFURBISHED InterContinental Manila is all set for Valentine's Day with its wide range of romantic dining options and room offerings.

Prince Albert Rotisserie offers guests a 5-course European set dinner menu for only P2,500++ per person. Choices include a Meli Melo of Appetizers, Mussel Soup L'Hirondelle or Shitake Pigeon Consomme, Grapefruit Ice Crystals, Smoked braised Sea Bass Fillet with Wine and Spanish Saffron or house-specialty American Rib-Eye. Café Jeepney brings back the thrill of old-fashioned romance with live serenades of Filipino love songs and a sumptuous buffet of local favorites for only P1,400++ per person.

Guests can also dine and dance under the stars as InterContinental Manila transforms its Ballroom Terrace into a beautiful Italian courtyard setting with a good view of the poolside garden. A set dinner menu specially prepared by executive chef Patrick Fournes will be served for only P1,900++ per person. Live guitar music will set the mood for romance. A long stemmed rose and a special gift will be given to ladies partaking of these special dining treats.

For the total InterContinental Manila experience, there are three room and dining packages to choose from. Royal Romance consists of an overnight stay for two in a Club InterContinental Room with dinner at Prince Albert Rotisserie inclusive of one bottle of wine for only P10,000++, Moonlight Romance offers an overnight stay for two in a Club Intercontinental Room and dinner at the Ballroom Terrace on Feb. 14 for only P8,000++, while Heart-2-Heart is made up of an overnight stay for two in a Club InterContinental Room inclusive of dinner buffet at Café Jeepney for only P7,000++. All packages entitle guests to access the new Club InterContinental Lounge for complimentary breakfast and evening cocktails. Additional perks include a 15-percent discount on Suriya Spa services, a gift pack from Rustan's, and a long-stemmed rose for the ladies. Room packages are valid for local residents only until Feb. 18.

For reservations and inquiries, call 815-9711, or visit the Valentine Desk at the lobby.

Love's a Snap!

CANON, THE LEADER IN DIGITAL imaging solutions, gives consumers a chance to capture the images of love this Valentine's with the "Ixus Love's a Snap!" promo. Running the whole month of February, have three long-stemmed red roses delivered to your special someone for free when you purchase any Canon Digital Ixus camera. So don't just sit back and watch the love bloom this February, capture the moments with a Canon Digital Ixus.

For every purchase of any of the participating Canon Digital Ixus cameras, the 900Ti, 850IS, 800IS, Ixus i7, 65 and 60, buyers also get three long-stemmed roses delivered to their special someone this Valentine's for free. To claim the flowers, just call the Flowers Express Hotline at 855-0000; give your name, the serial numbers of both the voucher you receive upon purchase and your new Digital Ixus camera, and the recipient's address to schedule delivery. And because this is the season of love, the freebies do not stop with the flowers. Every Digital Ixus purchase comes with a free leather case, metal neck strap, and memory card. The Ixus i7, 900Ti, and 850 IS also comes with a 512MB memory card while the Ixus 60, 65 and 800 IS, comes with a 256MB memory card. That means more space to capture those special moments.

For the past 10 years, Digital Ixus has epitomized design excellence, combining superb build quality, cutting edge technology and designer chic. Exquisitely styled and delightfully compact, each camera in the Digital Ixus range boasts of the powerful Digic technology that ensures the pictures you capture are crisp, clear and of the highest quality. Whichever Digital Ixus you choose for yourself or your special someone, you can take pleasure in holding an exceptional camera where style meets substance.

Wedding Planning and Coordination Seminar: Learn it from the professionals

LEARN VALUABLE TIPS AND know-how straight from the professional wedding planners and trade experts in the wedding industry. Gain the skills, business savvy and confidence to stand out.

The Philippine Association of Wedding Planners, Inc (PAWP) in cooperation with Edsa Shangri-La Hotel is once again giving a comprehensive two-day Basic Course on Wedding Planning and Coordination on March 24 and 25. The course is a complete learning package. It's crammed full of information, tips and exercises. Everything is beautifully packaged to provide the student with topics and materials which they can learn and make use of, long after completing the course. The seminar was designed by event planning experts, and the course incorporates years of experience of professional trade practitioners covering every aspect in the wedding industry.

Details are as follows:

DATE: March 24 and 25 (Saturday and Sunday)

TIME: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

VENUE: Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City

FEE: P12,000 which includes 2-day Lunch, AM/PM snacks, handouts, and a Certificate of Attendance.

A 10 percent discount shall be given to early bird registrants until Feb. 28.

Payment can be made to the account of Phil. Association of Wedding Planners at any PS Bank Curent Account No. 103-102-00030-2 (PS Bank Libis Branch). Please fax deposit slip to Ms. Nenita Zagala at (tel/fax) 421-2168.

HURRY! Slots are limited for quality participation.

For Registration and further information contact:

Celia B. Cunanan: 822-6191; 0917-792-9161;

Lyn: 0918-935-8974

email: celia@thesocialconnection.net

Love at the Riverbanks

RIVERBANKS MALL IN Marikina will be celebrating Valentine ushering musical presentations, arts exhibits, and a dating game.

Today at 5 p.m., it's a date with Mr. & Ms. Valentines at Riverbanks Foodcourt. Catch the much-awaited quest of guest searchers to find their lucky partner.

Riverbanks Mall is located at 84 A. Bonifacio Street, Marikina City. For event and leasing inquiries, call 948-9792 or 948-9758.

Be romanced

HAVE A CELEBRATION OF LOVE over a candlelight dinner amidst sentimental music and a mood so passionate in all the Hilton Cebu Resort & Spa's restaurant outlets, with complimentary sparkling wine and long-stemmed rose for the ladies.

It's a "Lunar Love Affair" at the Vanilla Beach Café featuring a Chinese Valentine Buffet for P1,250++, while the "Cupid Spell at Sea" with a 6-course Degustation Menu at P2,200++. Get "Embraced by the Ocean" at the tip of the wharf as Manny O's serves a special 5-course Wine & Wagyu Tapas Experience for P2,500++.

And as you celebrate your love at any of the restaurant outlets, you may get a chance to spend the night at the Presidential Suite, as the winning couple will be drawn at 10:30 p.m. at the Lobby Lounge.

For reservations and inquiries, call the Hilton Cebu Resort & Spa at 032-4927777.

10-city roadshow boosts RP image as int'l wedding, honeymoon hub

A WEDDING FAIR ROADSHOW slated in the country's top 10 cities from February to October is boosting the Philippines' image as a global wedding and honeymoon destination.

Dubbed "Kasalang Filipino," the event will showcase the different wedding customs and traditions in each of the 10 cities and surrounding localities, promote their products and services, highlight the latest trends in wedding fashion and practices, and serve as a tourist attraction itself to both the local and global market.

Kasalang Filipino is being promoted globally through ABS-CBN and Kasal.com, the event's presentors.

"Now on its third year, Kasalang Filipino 2007 is like a national celebration of Filipino wedding artistry in its finest tradition-from food to flowers, fabric, and festivities," said Kasal.com head Mathel Ong.

The Philippines' rise as a global wedding and honeymoon destination has been getting a big boost from Kasal.com, which is being accessed by people from all over the world, a good number of them joining the Kasalang Filipino during its 10-city, cross-country, year-round run.

Kasalang Filipino 2007 will be staged at the Tagaytay's Olivarez Convention Center from Feb. 23 to 25, Legazpi's Pepperland Hotel and Metro Gaisano from April 27 to 28, Dumaguete's Bethel Guest House on May 25 and 26, Iloilo's Amigo Terrace Hotel from June 15 to 17, Tarlac's Ninoy Aquino Center on June 22 and 23, Cagayan de Oro's Limketkai Mall from July 12 to 15, Davao's NCCC Mall from Sept. 14 to 16, San Pablo's One-Stop Shop on Sept. 28 and 29, Makati's The Enterprise Center on Oct. 11 and 12, and Cebu's Ayala Center from Oct. 19 to 21.

More information can be obtained from Web Philippines Inc. (415-9249, 414-3596, e-mail info@kasal.com, and website www.kasal.com).

Kasalang Filipino is sponsored by Philippine Airlines, Fuji-YKL, Chinabank, Red Hat, QP Designs, and Ariel Javelosa Photo & Video, and supported by ABS-CBN Regional Network Group, Lifestyle Network, DWRR, My Only Radio, Metro Weddings magazine, Philippine News, Flavors magazine, The Beat magazine, OFW Ngayon, Media G8way, loCalDirect, Yehey.com, HerWord.com, PinoyExchange.com, DigitalFilipino.com, Tsinoy.com, and Trabaho.com as media partners.

LOVE MONTH is celebrated at Chaikofi with four especially heart-pounding drinks: Fete de Frappe, Parfum de Citron, Son of a Dutch, and Bali Hi. Four exquisitely blended naturally cool drinks to satisfy the heart's desires can only be found at Chaikofi in Mall of Asia and Robinsons Ermita, Manila.

Love is in the air with acer

THE MONTH OF LOVE IS TRULY HERE. YOU CAN practically smell it in the air. For lovers, it is now time to shop around for that all-important gift. Chocolates and roses still lord it over as favorite, nay traditional, gift choices. Then there's apparel, footwear, or even stuffed toys.

Yet, there are other options...

In this age of modern and ultra-sophisticated technology, gadgets are slowly crawling up the top of the most wanted Valentine's Day gift echelon. For gadget gift ideas, go ask Acer, one of the world's top computer manufacturers. They have a slew of spectacular products that would surely sway the loved one off his or her feet.

One perfect example is Acer's Ferrari line of notebook computers. The product of a "marriage" between Acer and Scuderia Ferrari, the group responsible for creating the world's most recognizable and winningest Formula 1 racing team, the Ferrari 1000 and the 4000 almost instantaneously captured the attention of gadget-loving people and now, even those in the hunt for unique and aesthetically-pleasing gift choices.

Powered by AMD Turion 64 X2 1.8GHz dual-core processors, a 1GB 667MHz RAM, an integrated ATI Radeon Xpress 1150 graphics card and a humongous 160GB hard drive that spins at a blinding 5,400 revolutions per minute (RPM), all packed inside a gorgeous black carbon-fiber case with the recognizable Ferrari prancing horse logo, there is no doubt these gadgets are indeed Ferraris, without wheels, of course.

However, if you think a new PC is not needed yet, why not change the loved one's existing PC monitor instead? Acer also has the stunningly beautiful Ferrari LCD monitor like the Ferrari F20, a truly captivating peripheral that is not only physically attractive to the eyes but also packs the latest in visual technology.

Or if not the Ferrari F20, a worthy gift would be the AL1916W LCD monitor that can surely hold its own versus the Ferrari F20. With a 19-inch screen, 1140 x 900 resolution, a 700:1 contrast ratio, a 5ms response time, and a silver black finish, the AL1916W LCD monitor would also be a noteworthy gift.

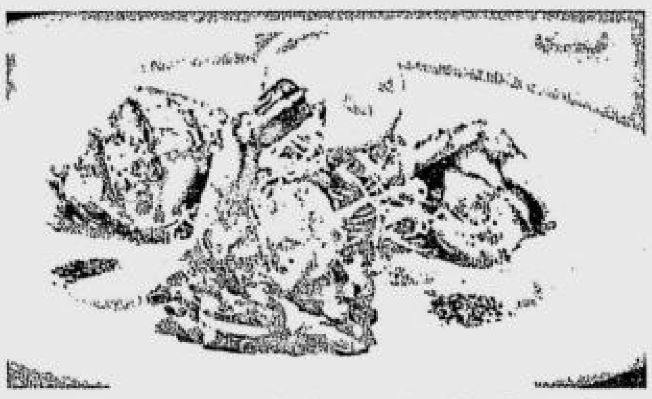
Of course there are other products in the Acer lineup that's worth taking a look at, like the Acer Aspire and TravelMate notebook computers. Just like their Ferrari siblings, the Aspire and TravelMate possess not just good aesthetics but also display superior performance and portability for today's modern-day cyberwarriors and telecommuters. With their excellent features and flexibility, they're the newest buzzwords for mobile computing and improving overall productivity and efficiency for the new-generation workers of today and of course, excellent gift ideas as well, practically for any season.

With all these choices, you can never go wrong with your Valentine's Day gift. So why not contact your nearest Acer distributor and find out how Acer products can help keep the love light burning in this month of love, affection, and devotion. Who knows? An Acer product may turn out to be that perfect gift you have always been looking for.

i♥acer

Where to Stop Where to GO with your Sweetheart

Cravings of the heart



CELEBRATE THE SEASON OF LOVE AT Cravings, where food enjoyment is elevated into an art, best savored with a loved one in a homey ambience. This Valentine's season, the restaurant has unveiled "Cravings of the Heart" - with two new dishes created especially for the occasion. There will also be other surprise treats that will surely touch the heart.

First is the Grilled Seafood Trio with Red Capsicum Sabayon: A pasta dish in pesto sauce served with a mélange of three seafood varieties-grilled prawn, fish fillet and squid-cooked with red bell peppers, light and frothy sabayon sauce, for an über tantalizing meal. Served fresh and hot, this dish will make everyone say those "three little words" in a heartbeat.

Next is the Tournedos of Beef with Asparagus and Kani Salad: Pan seared beef tenderloin cooked to your preferred doneness with rich hollandaise sauce, kani and vegetable salad with herb vinaigrette, asparagus and bacon-flavored mashed potato. Each bite into this marriage of flavors will deliver rousing memories that will definitely linger long after the meal is over.

Both dishes come with a generous Eat-all-you-can Salad (which Cravings is known for) and for dessert - a luscious slice of Strawberry Chantilly, a delicate treat that is too tempting to resist.

The Bakeshop at Cravings likewise offers other pleasures to indulge in-surely a sweet way to your loved one's heart. Diners can choose from such tempting varieties as Double Chocolate, Devil's Foodcake, Choco Caramel, Strawberry Rhapsody, and Strawberry Shortcake. A special heart-shaped version of the cake is available this February.

Cravings is also throwing in other surprises to diners especially set for this Valentine's season until Feb. 28, such as free flowers for the ladies from The Flower Shop Around the Corner and Flowers By Sylvia, and musicians will serenade love-struck couples on the special day of hearts.

Cravings restaurant offers catering services and has function rooms available for various occasions and celebrations. For more inquiries, call 426-6681/426-6567 (Katipunan), 635-6087/88 (Shangri-La Plaza Mall), 815-4269/71 (Fraser Place, Makati), 426-9736 (Tomas Morato), 929-1427 (West Avenue) and 850-4437 (Festival Mall, Alabang).

Find the one in speed dating

THERE'S ONE MUST TO GO FOR this event: You must be single with no date. Izamatch.com is hosting the popular speed dating event in The Courtyard along Makati Avenue on Feb. 16 at 7 p.m. where singles have the chance to hang out with singles and perhaps find the one. Cocktails and drinks are free, and entertainment to loosen things up includes a love magician, songs, prizes before the night ends.

Speed dating is the fun and new way of meeting people. It's the fastest way of making friends and even falling in love.

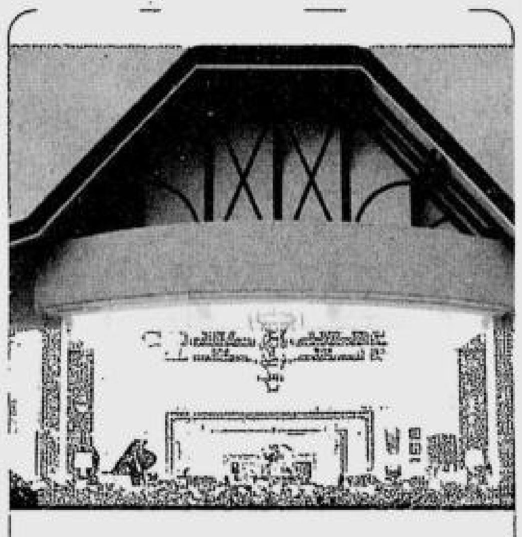
It is a form of round-robin dating in which each person can meet up to more than 10 people of the opposite sex, all in one evening. How? Each date only lasts seven minutes. There are 10 men and 10 women, each paired up and sitting on separate tables. The seven minutes will be all you have to find out all you can about each partner. After that, everyone switches partners. This continues on until everybody has had a date with each other.

At the end of the event, you will indicate the people you are interested in, and if there is a match (meaning the person you chose is interested in you too) then you will be given their contact numbers. Not only do you get to know lots of people in one night, you also run no risk of rejection.

This is really learning all about another person and the potential for a relationship with him/her, in a faster and more efficient way. You don't need months to find out if someone is compatible for you. All you need is seven minutes and the right questions to ask.

Well, don't spend February with your married friends, try to join the Izamatch event and surround yourself with other singles in an event called "Speed dating" - find the one.

For more information, log on to www.izamatch.com or e-mail info@izamatch.com.



Romantic buffet dinner

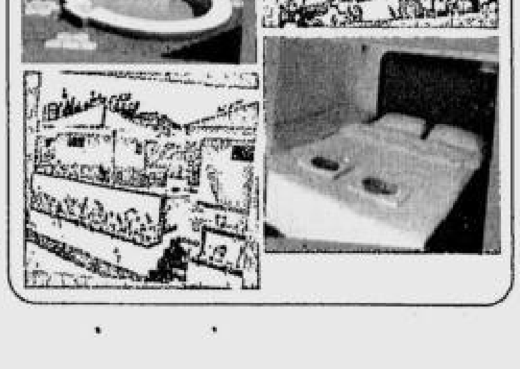
GET A ROMANTIC HIGH IN THE COOL, CRISP air of the country's favorite vacation capital, Tagaytay City, this Valentine's Day. Treat your beloved to a sumptuous buffet dinner at the Taal Vista Hotel. Get the appetite going with a wide array of appetizers and then start off with the Shelfish Chowder. Choose to splurge on pasta or the US Roasted Beef. The Paella Valenciana is a must-try and the Baked Chicken Breast will fill you up with utmost satisfaction. Finish up with dessert with choices of the Mocha Mousse or the Peach Crumble and lots of others more. For only P750++ per person, feast on this buffet dinner with a glass of wine and tokens for the ladies. And, to set the mood right, a 4-piece orchestra will serenade your evening. Call 751-3088 up to 89 or 886-4325 for more details.

A month-long 'Suiteness'

SAVOR THE ROMANTIC AMBIENCE OF YOUR luxurious suite as you celebrate love at The Linden Suites. Until Feb. 28, guests availing themselves of the month-long "Suiteness" promo will get a free pampering kit from Zen Zest. Have a romantic interlude in the studio suite for only P3,800++. Couples availing themselves of the promo also get to relax in the fully equipped Health Club. Enjoy free use of the heated indoor pool, sauna, gym and Jacuzzi. Get special Valentine sweets from Leonidas on the Day of Hearts, Feb. 14. Try the ongoing Azzurro Bistro's Sweet Escapades promo until Feb. 17 and get a five-course dinner and a glass of Asti Spumante while enjoying the evening's entertainment. To avail of the month-long "Suiteness" promo, call The Linden Suites at 638-7878 or e-mail sales@lindensuites.com. The promo is good for local residents and "balikbayans" only.

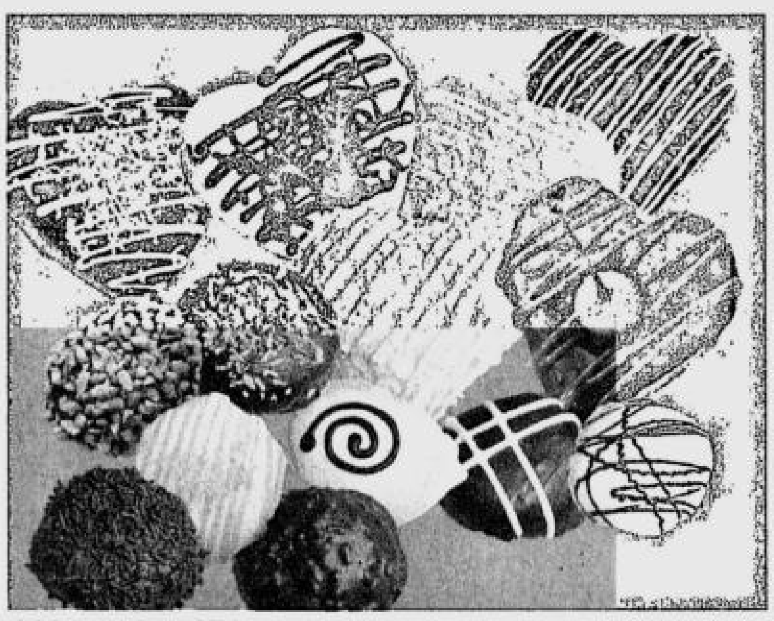
Couple's delight

COME AND FALL IN LOVE ALL OVER AGAIN WITH your special someone this Valentine's Day with CME Couple's Delight Package. For only P3,695 per couple, you can share a few more special moments together as you enjoy an overnight stay in your own private garden villa equipped with cable TV, hot and cold shower, and outdoor mini pool. The package also includes a sumptuous candle-lit dinner and a heart-warming breakfast the next day for you and your loved one. You can also enjoy the many fun-filled facilities the resort offers like the golf driving range, CME Beachwaves, and CME Funtasy Lagoon. Let CME Resorts and Hotels become part of your memories. Call now and make a reservation at 660-2801, 658-2065, or 284-4740. This promo is available only for the month of February.



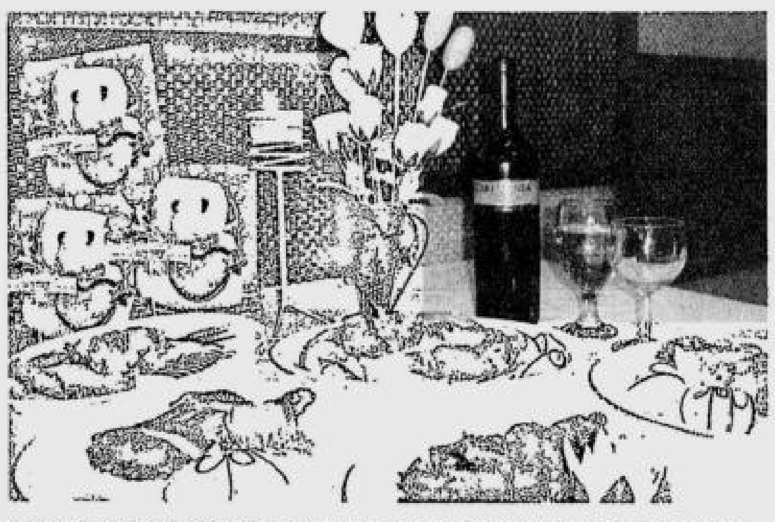
'MI AMOR'

Savor a taste of Spain with your special loved one this month as Casa Armas Tapas Bar Y Restaurante celebrates 'Mi Amor: A Spanish Celebration of Love' from Feb. 13 to 28. Offered is a special Valentine menu for two with Ensalada del Cesar (Caesar Salad) as starter; Paella Valenciana and Chuleton Segoviano (certified Angus beef steak) for the main course; and Chocolate Decadence for dessert. This delectable package for two comes with two complimentary glasses of Casa Cervantes Tempranillo (Vino Tinto). This promo is available at the three branches of Casa Armas located at the 3rd level of Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center (757-4961); 132 Jupiter Street, Bel-Air Village, Makati City (897-3542) and at The Podium, 18 ADB Avenue along Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City (687-3665).



COUNTRYSTYLE DELIGHTS

Fall in love all over again this Valentine's Day with CountryStyle's Valentine Delights! Melt your loved-one's heart with the delicious Crazee Hearts and Heart Bits. Get three Crazee Hearts in a Valentine box for only P49 or six Heart-Bits in a heart-shaped box for only P75, available only until Feb. 15 at all CountryStyle outlets.



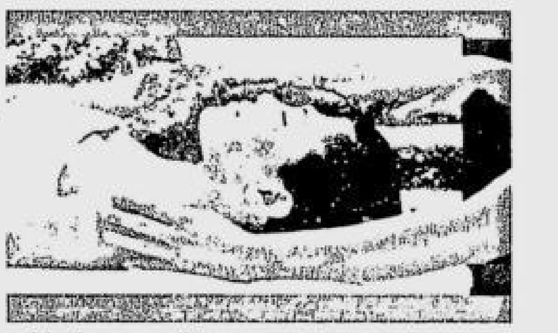
BLUE BAY RESTAURANT (at the corner of TM Kalaw Ave. [South Road] and Parade Street, Rizal Park, Ermita, Manila) offers a buffet of Filipino, Asian and international dishes for only P430 net per person. Guests on Valentine's Day get a free Valentine drink and a cuddly stuffed Blue Bay bear. Call 525-0514 and 400-7437.

Feel love

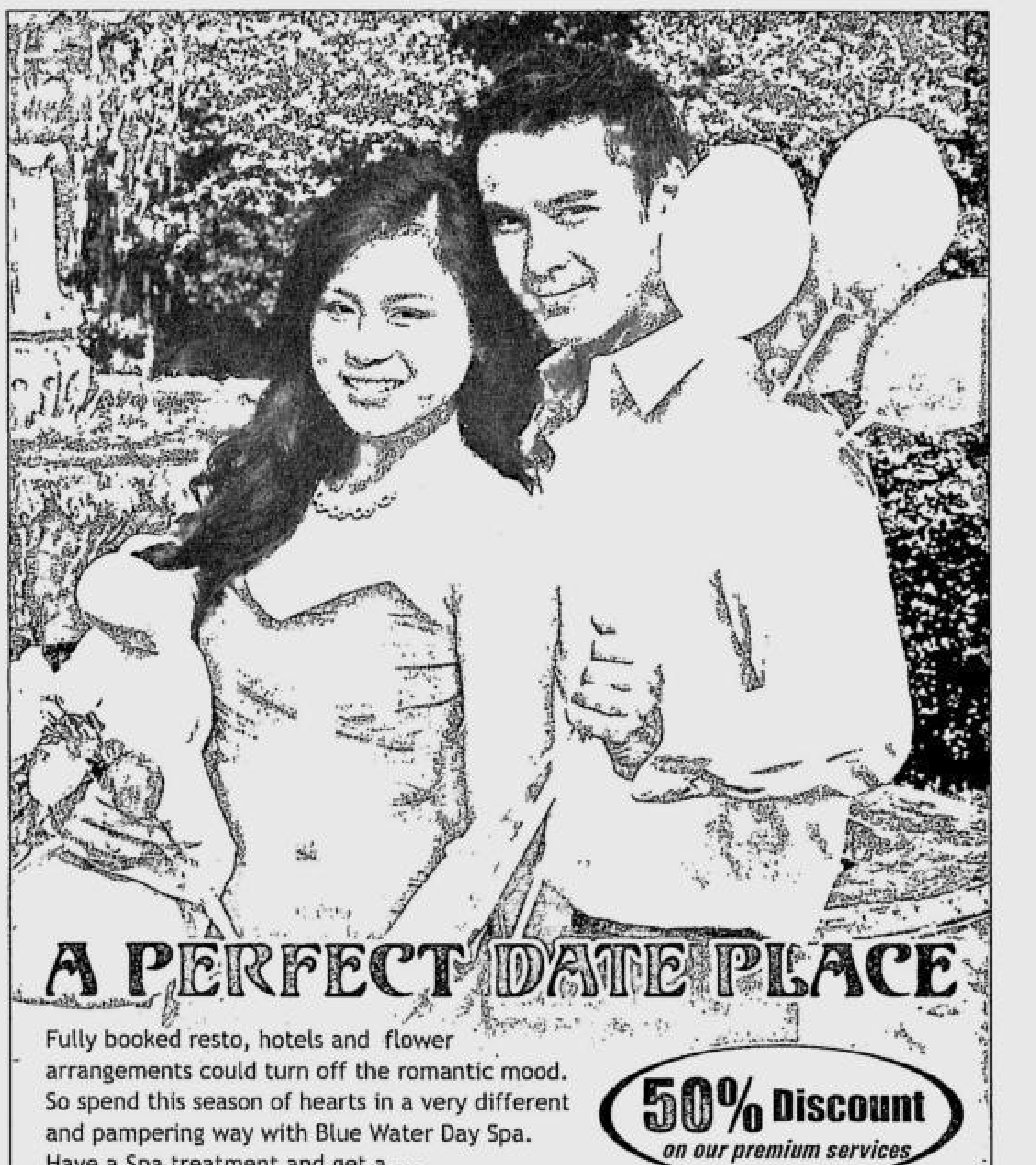
THE SWEET SMELL OF TRUE LOVE PERMEATES THE AIR THIS WHOLE week at Eastwood City, as three of the country's top artists and international pop superstar David Pomeranz serenade lovers and music lovers. Rock and roll band Bloomfields brings back the classics from the '50s and '60s on Valentine's Day, and David Pomeranz gets intimate with Eastwood City regulars on the 15th. Acoustic singer Nyoy Volante will make the ladies swoon on the 16th, as balladeer Christian Bautista melts female hearts on the final show the next day. The price of admission will surely make you fall in love with Eastwood City, as all shows are absolutely free and start promptly at 8 p.m. at the Eastwood Central Plaza from Feb. 14 to 17. Call 687-6770 to 74 or text (0917) 8EWCITY now for more details.

THIS VALENTINE'S, CHOOSE HAPPINESS, CHOOSE CADBURY

Without doubt, Valentines is a time to be indulgent. One of the best ways to express this is through chocolates and there's no better way to express this than by presenting your loved one with a block of new Cadbury Gold. 'Chocolates have always been synonymous to romance and Valentines, in the same way that excellent chocolate taste and superior quality are tantamount to Cadbury,' says Cadbury product manager Geraldine Gilera. 'Cadbury Gold is our latest product offering for discriminating chocolate lovers who want to make their Valentine celebrations extra special and memorable. We believe that one must not give up on life's finer things and that includes Cadbury chocolates,' adds Gilera. The newest of Cadbury chocolates, Cadbury Gold perfectly complements any intimate gathering. Sparks will surely fly as it features a mouthwatering blend of tart dark chocolate and pure milk chocolate. This is complemented by generous loads of fruits, crusty oven-roasted nuts and crisp wafer pieces. Available in 2 variants, strawberry & almond, and apricot & walnut, you'll surely find the perfect one for your loved one. This Valentine's, choose happiness, choose Cadbury Gold.



BLUE WATER DAY SPA prides of its signature treatment, the Crystal Massage Therapy, which sets it apart from the rest. Their unique crystals came from a land renowned to produce the best crystals in the world. These crystals have been used to treat ill health, mental and emotional discomfort. Crystals are conductors, which enhance and accelerate the healing process from various illnesses due to stress, pain and/or aches. Using the advance technique of crystal massage, this therapy will leave you in a complete state of relaxation. Be pampered with this treatment, come and visit Blue Water Day Spa and avail our special Valentine's Promo. Get a 50 percent discount on our signature Face and Body Crystal Massage with its promo period of Feb. 12 - 18. Also open for franchising, for franchising inquiries, call 723-4932 / 723-5534 or 0915-5741099 and look for Ms. Glicel. Face and Body Crystal Massage is offered at all Blue Water Day Spa branches; Greenhills, Makati, Alabang & Mother Ignacia. Experience this remarkable treatment. Visit us now.



Fully booked resto, hotels and flower arrangements could turn off the romantic mood. So spend this season of hearts in a very different and pampering way with Blue Water Day Spa. Have a Spa treatment and get a ...

50% Discount on our premium services

PROMO PERIOD: FEB 12-18, 2007

Per DTI-NCR Permit No 0637, Series of 2007

Blue Water DAY SPA

GREENHILLS:
Platinum 1000, #16 Annapolis St.,
Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila
Tels 723-4932 / 723-5534
Cellphone Nos. 0927-5981138
0917-8810093

ALABANG:
Unit 101 Southgate Bldg. Finance Drive,
Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang,
Muntinlupa City
Tels 842-7667 / 842-7639

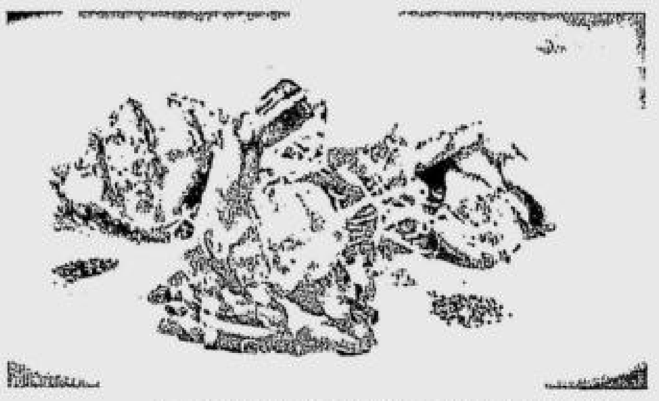
MAKATI:
Tropical Palms Condominium,
#103 Dela Rosa St., cor. Perea St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City
Tels 817-3126 / 817-5455
Cellphone No 0917-8810092

MOTHER IGNACIA:
#141 Mother Ignacia St., Diliman,
Quezon City
Tels 927-2258 / 928-1750
Cellphone No 0917-8329002

www.bluewaterdayspa.com

Where to Stop Where to GO with your Sweetheart

Cravings of the heart



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Both dishes come with a generous Eat-all-you-can Salad (which Cravings is known for) and for dessert - a luscious slice of Strawberry Chantilly, a delicate treat that is too tempting to resist.

The Bakeshop at Cravings likewise offers other pleasures to indulge in-surely a sweet way to your loved one's heart. Diners can choose from such tempting varieties as Double Chocolate, Devil's Foodcake, Choco Caramel, Strawberry Rhapsody, and Strawberry Shortcake. A special heart-shaped version of the cake is available this February.

Cravings is also throwing in other surprises to diners especially set for this Valentine's season until Feb. 28, such as free flowers for the ladies from The Flower Shop Around the Corner and Flowers By Sylvia, and musicians will serenade love-struck couples on the special day of hearts.

Cravings restaurant offers catering services and has function rooms available for various occasions and celebrations. For more inquiries, call 426-6681/426-6567 (Katipunan), 635-6087/88 (Shangri-La Plaza Mall), 815-4269/71 (Fraser Place, Makati), 426-9736 (Tomas Morato), 929-1427 (West Avenue) and 850-4437 (Festival Mall, Alabang).

Find the one in speed dating

THERE'S ONE MUST TO GO FOR this event: You must be single. With no date, Izamatch.com is [illegible] its popular speed dating event in the courtyard along Makati Avenue on Feb. 16. You, the single, have a chance to hang out with singles and perhaps find the one. Cocktails and drinks are free, and entertainment to [illegible] before the night ends.

Speed dating is a fun and new way of meeting people. It's the [illegible] way of making friends and eventually falling in love.

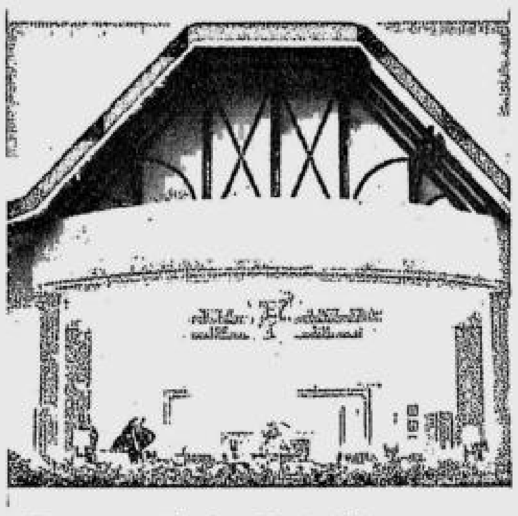
It's a form of round-robin dating, in which each person can meet up to more than 10 people of the opposite sex all in one evening. How? Each date only lasts seven minutes! There are 10 men and 10 women, each paired up and sitting on separate tables. The seven minutes will be all you have to find out all you can about each partner. After that, everyone switches partners. This continues on until everybody has had a date with each other.

At the end of the event, you will indicate the people you are interested in, and if there is a match (meaning the person you chose is interested in you too) then you will be given their contact numbers. Not only do you get to know lots of people in one night, you also run no risk of rejection.

This is really learning all about another person and the potential for a relationship with him/her in a [illegible] and more efficient way. You don't need months to find out if someone is compatible for you. All you need is seven minutes and the right questions to ask.

Well, don't spend February with your married friends. Try to join the Izamatch event and surround yourself with other singles at an event called "Speed dating - find the one."

For more information, log on to www.izamatch.com or e-mail info@izamatch.com.



Romantic buffet dinner

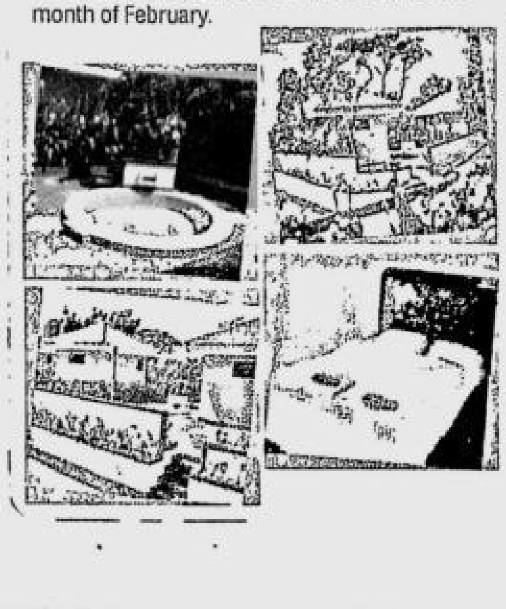
GET A ROMANTIC HIGH IN THE COOL, CRISP air of the country's favorite vacation capital, Tagaytay City, this Valentine's Day. Treat your beloved to a sumptuous buffet dinner at the Taal Vista Hotel. Get the appetite going with a wide array of appetizers and then start off with the Shelfish Chowder. Choose to splurge on pasta or the US Roasted Beef. The Paella Valenciana is a must-try and the Baked Chicken Breast will fill you up with utmost satisfaction. Finish up with dessert with choices of the Mocha Mousse or the Peach Crumble and lots of others more. For only P750++ per person, feast on this buffet dinner with a glass of wine and tokens for the ladies. And, to set the mood right, a 4-piece orchestra will serenade your evening. Call 751-3088 up to 89 or 886-4325 for more details.

A month-long 'Suiteness'

SAVOR THE ROMANTIC AMBIENCE OF YOUR luxurious suite as you celebrate love at The Linden Suites. Until Feb. 28, guests availing themselves of the month-long "Suiteness" promo will get a free pampering kit from Zen Zest. Have a romantic interlude in the studio suite for only P3,800++. Couples availing themselves of the promo also get to relax in the fully equipped Health Club. Enjoy free use of the heated indoor pool, sauna, gym and Jacuzzi. Get special Valentine sweets from Leonidas on the Day of Hearts, Feb. 14. Try the ongoing Azzurro Bistro's Sweet Escapades promo until Feb. 17 and get a five-course dinner and a glass of Asti Spumante while enjoying the evening's entertainment. To avail of the month-long "Suiteness" promo, call The Linden Suites at 638-7878 or e-mail sales@lindensuites.com. The promo is good for local residents and "balikbayans" only.

Couple's delight

COME AND FALL IN LOVE ALL OVER AGAIN WITH your special someone this Valentine's Day with CME Couple's Delight Package. For only P3,695 per couple, you can share a few more special moments together as you enjoy an overnight stay in your own private garden villa equipped with cable TV, hot and cold shower, and outdoor mini pool. The package also includes a sumptuous candle-lit dinner and a heart-warming breakfast the next day for you and your loved one. You can also enjoy the many fun-filled facilities the resort offers like the golf driving range, CME Beachwaves, and CME Funtasy Lagoon. Let CME Resorts and Hotels become part of your memories. Call now and make a reservation at 660-2801, 658-2065, or 284-4740. This promo is available only for the month of February.



'MI AMOR'

Savor a taste of Spain with your special loved one this month as Casa Armas Tapas Bar Y Restaurante celebrates 'Mi Amor: A Spanish Celebration of Love' from Feb. 13 to 28. Offered is a special Valentine menu for two with Ensalada del Cesar (Caesar Salad) as starter; Paella Valenciana and Chuleton Segoviano (certified Angus beef steak) for the main course; and Chocolate Decadence for dessert. This delectable package for two comes with two complimentary glasses of Casa Cervantes Tempranillo (Vino Tinto). This promo is available at the three branches of Casa Armas located at the 3rd level of Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center (757-4961); 132 Jupiter Street, Bel-Air Village, Makati City (897-3542) and at The Podium, 18 ADB Avenue along Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City (687-3665).

COUNTRYSTYLE DELIGHTS

Fall in love all over again this Valentine's Day with CountryStyle's Valentine Delights! Melt your loved-one's heart with the delicious Crazee Hearts and Heart Bits. Get three Crazee Hearts in a Valentine box for only P49 or six Heart-Bits in a heart-shaped box for only P75, available only until Feb. 15 at all CountryStyle outlets.

BLUE BAY RESTAURANT (at the corner of TM Kalaw Ave. [South Road] and Parade Street, Rizal Park, Ermita, Manila) offers a buffet of Filipino, Asian and international dishes for only P430 net per person. Guests on Valentine's Day get a free Valentine drink and a cuddly stuffed Blue Bay bear. Call 525-0514 and 400-7437.

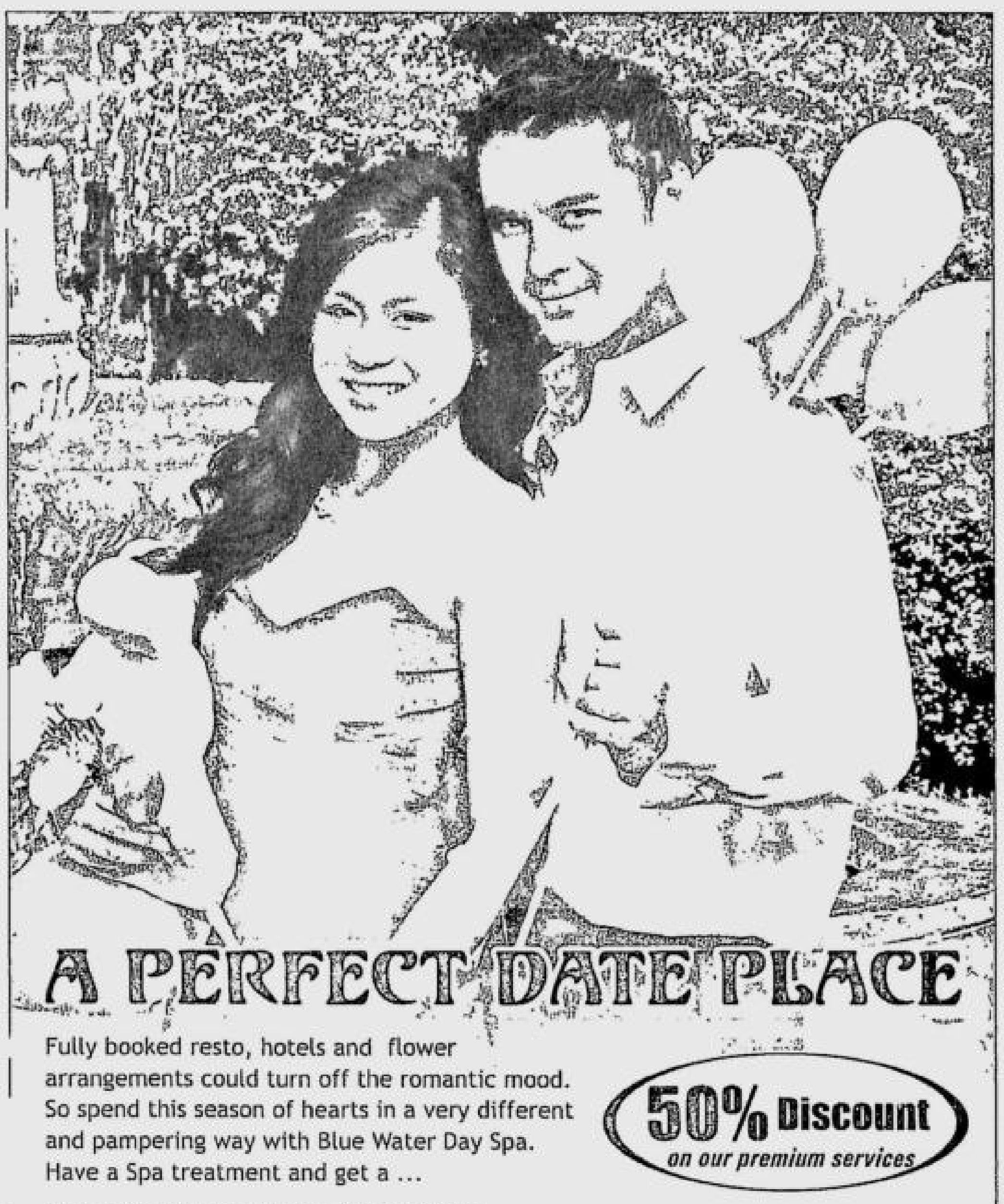
Feel love

THE SWEET SMELL OF TRUE LOVE PERMEATES THE AIR THIS WHOLE week at Eastwood City, as three of the country's top artists and international pop superstar David Pomeranz serenade lovers and music lovers. Rock and roll band Bloomfields brings back the classics from the '50s and '60s on Valentine's Day, and David Pomeranz gets intimate with Eastwood City regulars on the 15th. Acoustic singer Nyoy Volante will make the ladies swoon on the 16th, as balladeer Christian Bautista melts female hearts on the final show the next day. The price of admission will surely make you fall in love with Eastwood City, as all shows are absolutely free and start promptly at 8 p.m. at the Eastwood Central Plaza from Feb. 14 to 17. Call 687-6770 to 74 or text (0917) 8EWCITY now for more details.

THIS VALENTINE'S, CHOOSE HAPPINESS, CHOOSE CADBURY

Without doubt, Valentines is a time to be indulgent. One of the best ways to express this is through chocolates and there's no better way to express this than by presenting your loved one with a block of new Cadbury Gold. 'Chocolates have always been synonymous to romance and Valentines, in the same way that excellent chocolate taste and superior quality are tantamount to Cadbury,' says Cadbury product manager Geraldine Gilera. 'Cadbury Gold is our latest product offering for discriminating chocolate lovers who want to make their Valentine celebrations extra special and memorable. We believe that one must not give up on life's finer things and that includes Cadbury chocolates,' adds Gilera. The newest of Cadbury chocolates, Cadbury Gold perfectly complements any intimate gathering. Sparks will surely fly as it features a mouthwatering blend of tart dark chocolate and pure milk chocolate. This is complemented by generous loads of fruits, crusty oven-roasted nuts and crisp wafer pieces. Available in 2 variants, strawberry & almond, and apricot & walnut, you'll surely find the perfect one for your loved one. This Valentine's, choose happiness, choose Cadbury Gold.

BLUE WATER DAY SPA prides of its signature treatment, the Crystal Massage Therapy, which sets it apart from the rest. Their unique crystals came from a land renowned to produce the best crystals in the world. These crystals have been used to treat ill health, mental and emotional discomfort. Crystals are conductors, which enhance and accelerate the healing process from various illnesses due to stress, pain and/or aches. Using the advance technique of crystal massage, this therapy will leave you in a complete state of relaxation. Be pampered with this treatment, come and visit Blue Water Day Spa and avail our special Valentine's Promo. Get a 50 percent discount on our signature Face and Body Crystal Massage with its promo period of Feb. 12 - 18. Also open for franchising, for franchising inquiries, call 723-4932 / 723-5534 or 0915-5741099 and look for Ms. Glicel. Face and Body Crystal Massage is offered at all Blue Water Day Spa branches; Greenhills, Makati, Alabang & Mother Ignacia. Experience this remarkable treatment. Visit us now.



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Avoid the Trans Fat Trap

The two letters that seem to dominate every health discussion nowadays are 'TF', which stands for Trans Fat. Product labels at grocery stores are boasting about being "trans fat free", and some restaurants have publicized their efforts to switch to oils that have zero trans fat. But what exactly is it, and why is it so harmful to the health? Most importantly, how do we reduce our intake? Perhaps the FAQ below can shed some important light on this "heavy" issue.

Now Entering A Trans Fat Free Zone
Good Health Begins Here

In a nutshell, what are trans fats? While some trans fat (around 21 percent) naturally appear in milk and meat (and are not harmful), most are formed when hydrogen is added to oil. This process is used to turn liquid oil into the familiar white creamy vegetable shortening and some of the hard margarines. These products are then used, not just at home, but in food manufacturing to produce crackers, cookies, snack foods, and more.

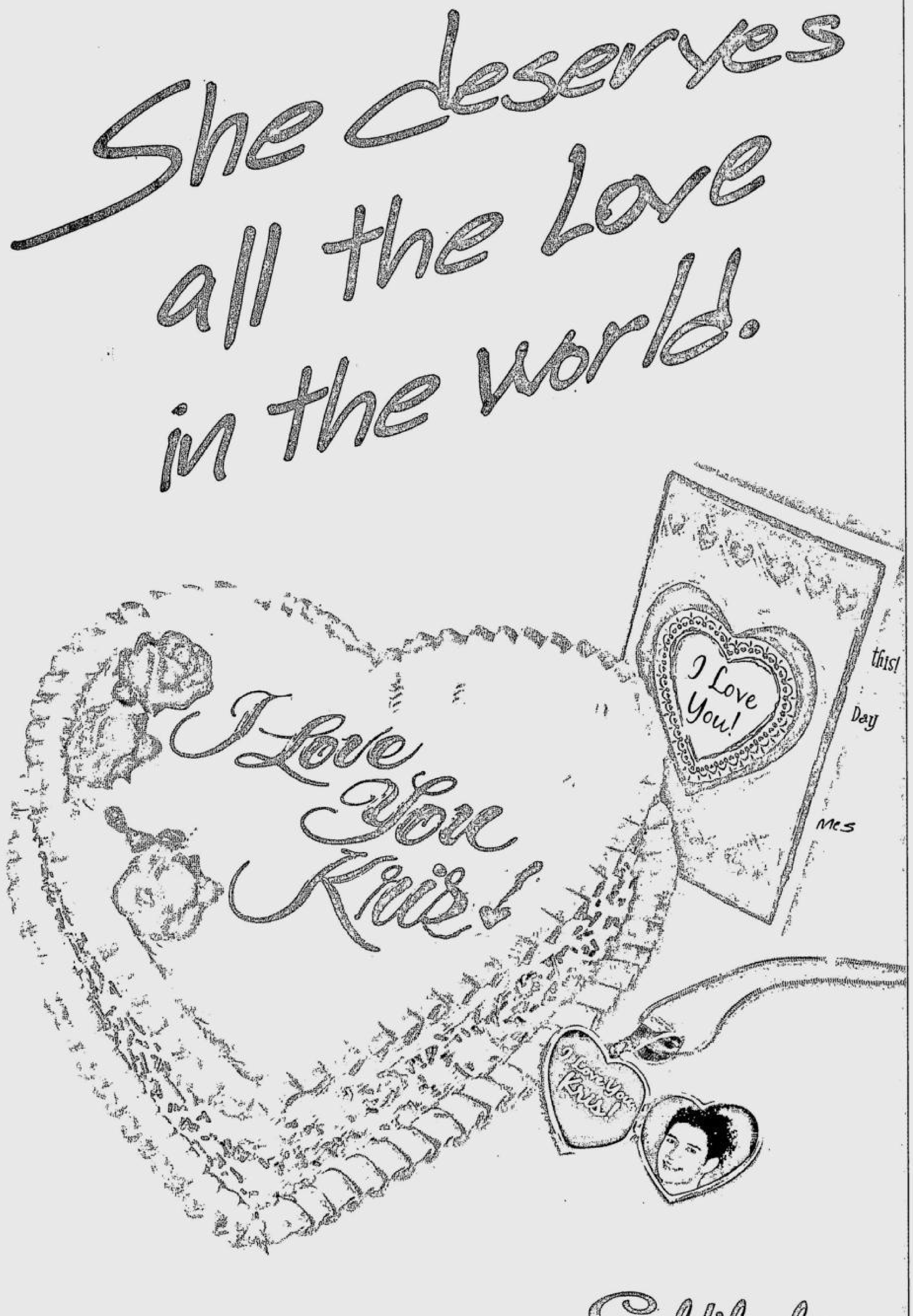
Are all fats bad? Moderate amounts of fat in the diet are considered healthy. Fats are important for growth and maintenance of the body, aid in the absorption of the fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K), add flavor to foods, and fill you up. A healthy diet includes about 20-35 percent of all your calories from fat. But, the type of fat is important.

What are the different types of fat? Monounsaturated fats are considered the healthiest since they help to lower your serum cholesterol. These are found in foods such as walnuts, almonds, canola oil, avocados, and olive oil. Polyunsaturated fats (including soybean, sunflower oil, and corn oil) can lower cholesterol as well, but some of the effect is coming from a lowering of your good (HDL) serum cholesterol. Both saturated fats (found in animal fats, coconut oil, and palm kernel oil) and trans fats should be limited to less than 10 percent of your total calorie intake.

Why are trans fats harmful? Like saturated fats, trans fats have been found to raise your serum cholesterol levels - in fact, a number of studies have determined that trans fats raise cholesterol even MORE than saturated fats.

How can I start reducing my trans fat intake? Since more than 93 percent of Filipinos eat bread at least five times a week, it would make good sense to choose a variety that is both delicious and healthy. Apart from its "fresh-from-the-oven" taste, Goldilocks HEALTHtinapay breads are bromate-free, contain no trans fatty acids, and are cholesterol-free. Moreover, they are fortified with Vitamin A, prompting the Department of Health (DOH) to refer to Goldilocks HEALTHtinapay as the "Super Bread".

Start the year right and make Goldilocks HEALTHtinapay your everyday bread. You will see that great taste and nutritional value can go perfectly hand-in-hand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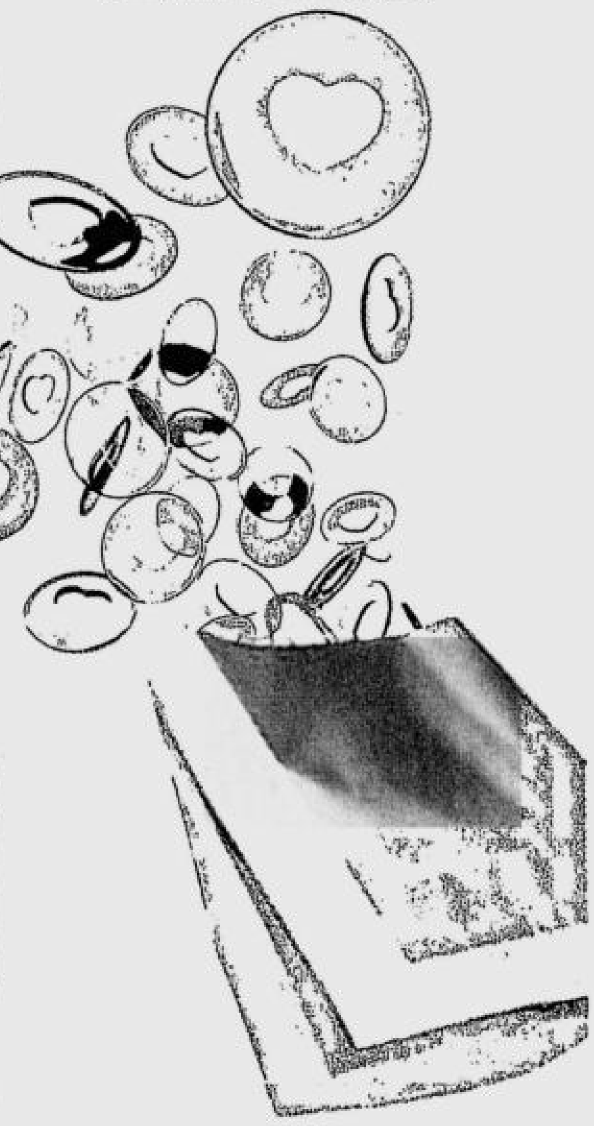

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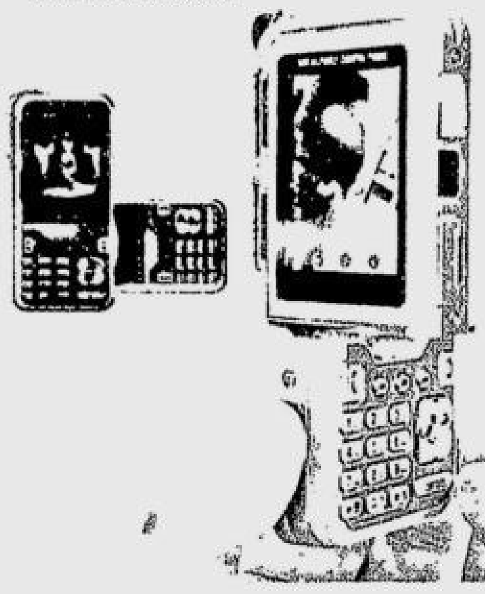

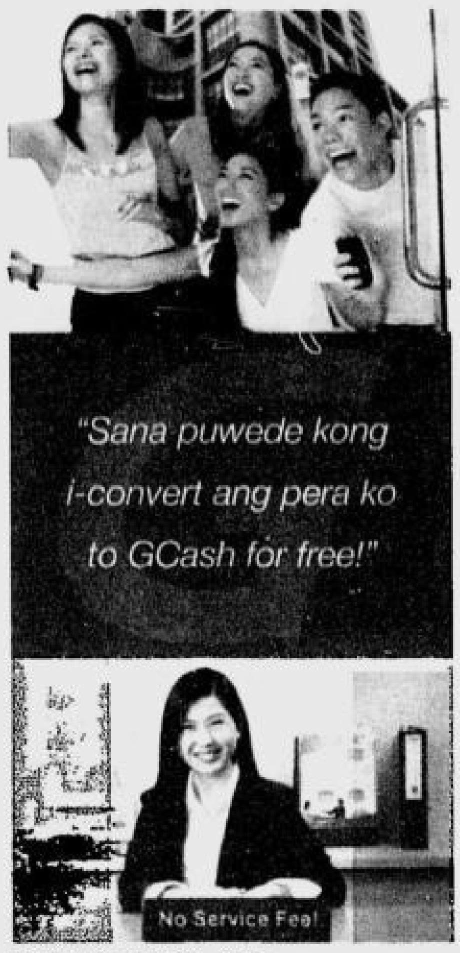
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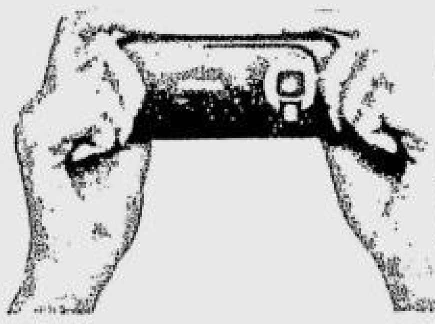

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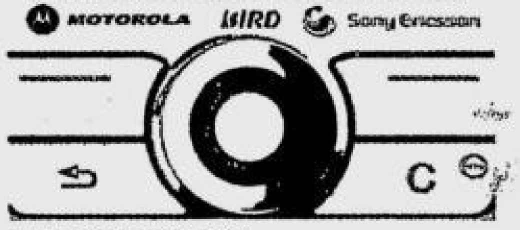

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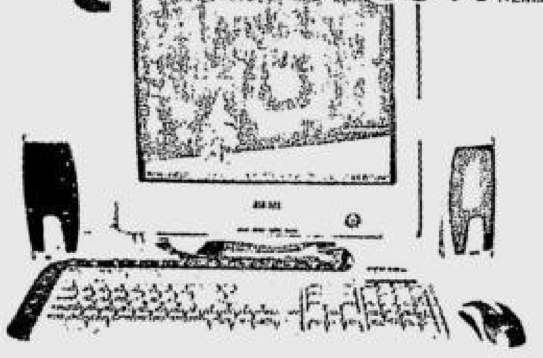

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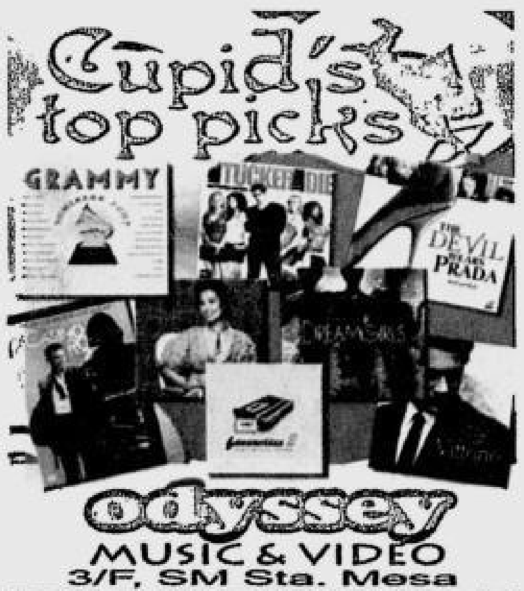

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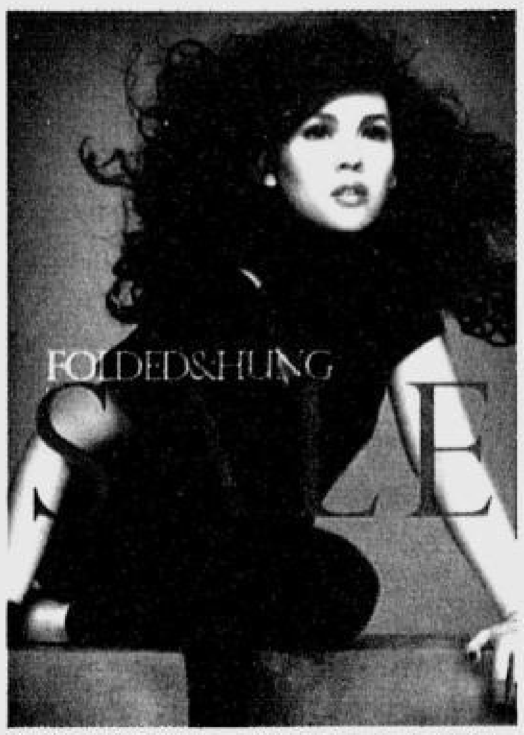

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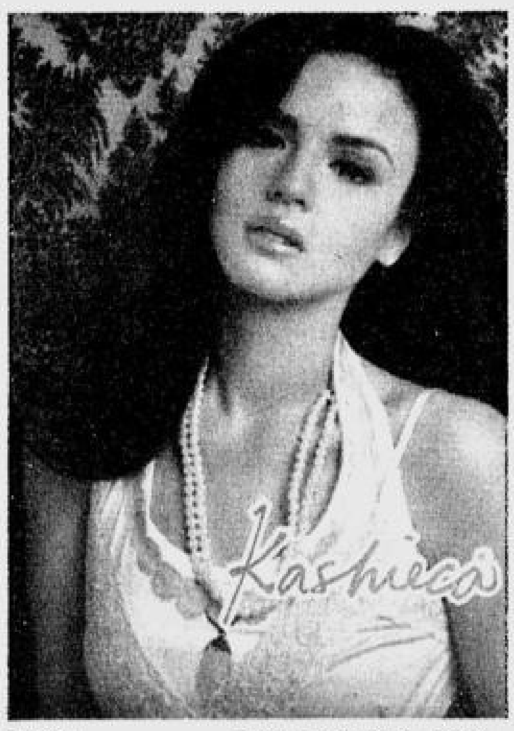

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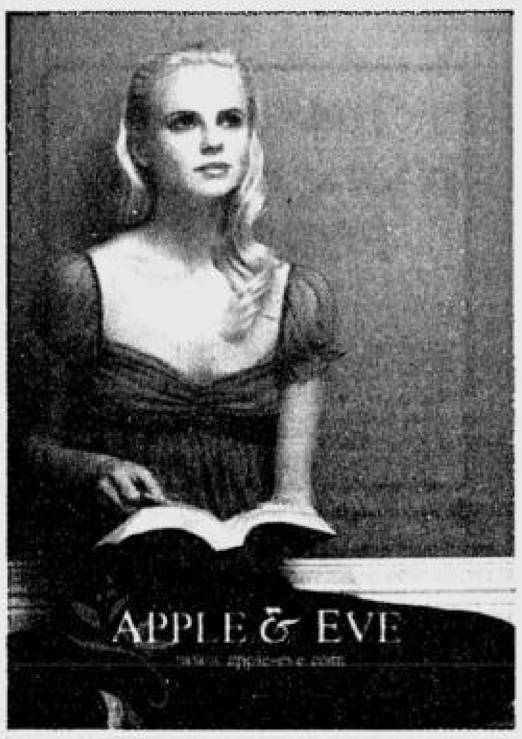

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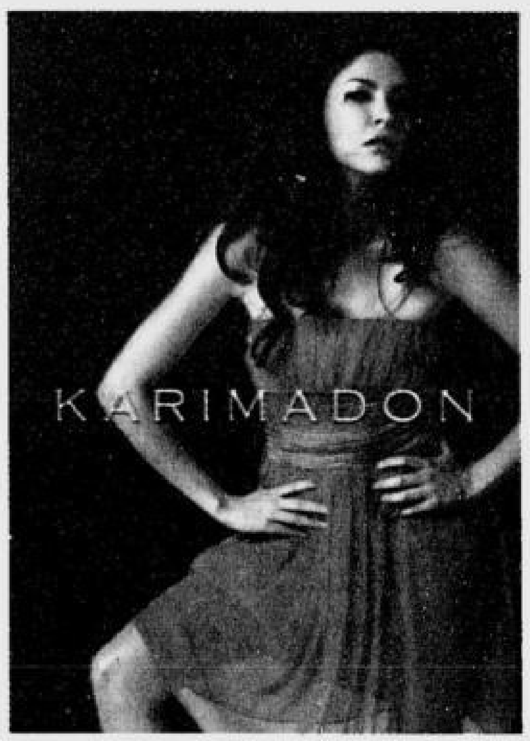

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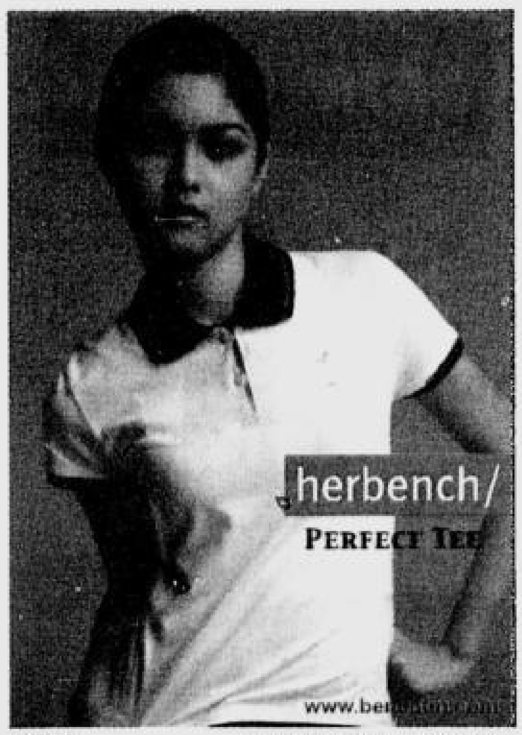

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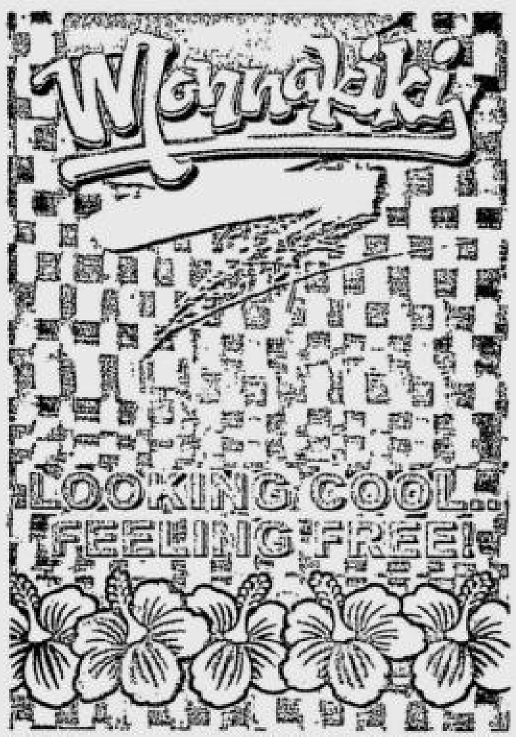
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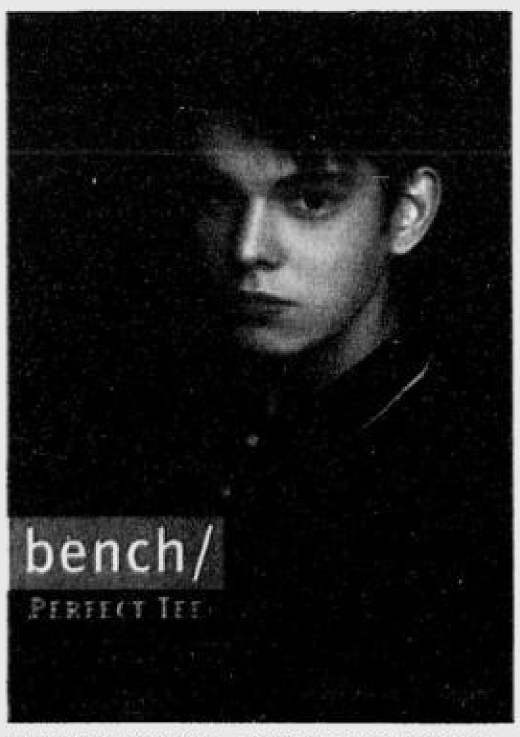

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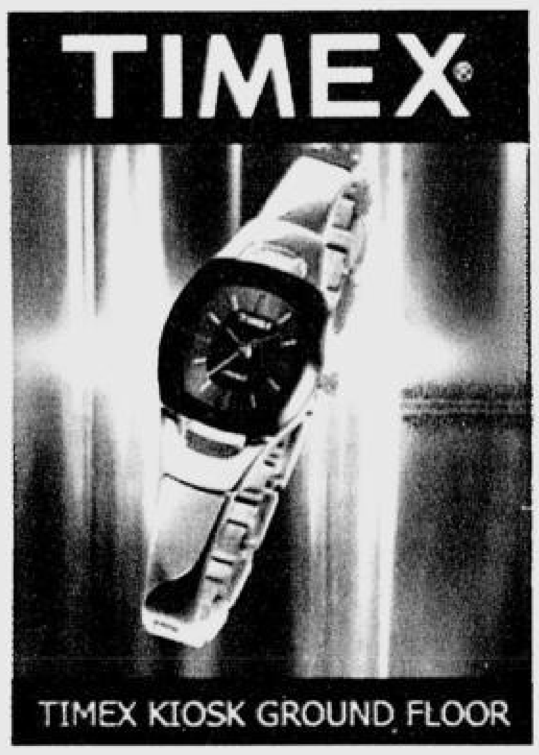

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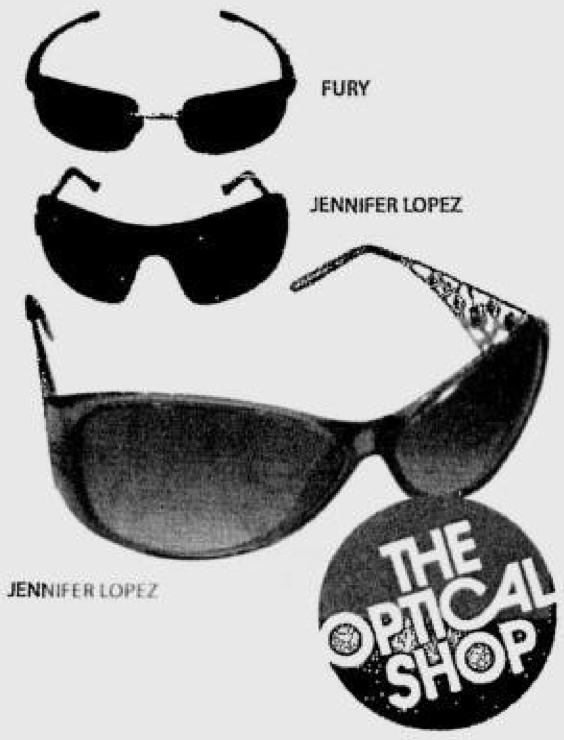

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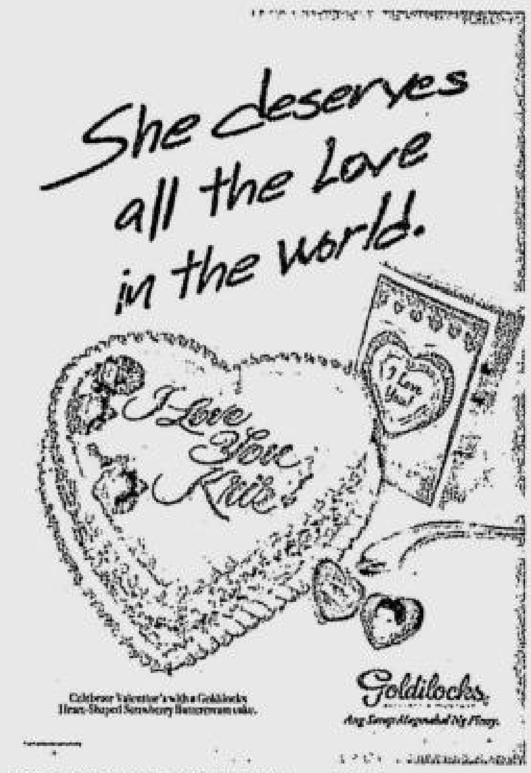
Eat Out!

SM City
STA. MESA

February 14 is Valentine's Day

Your Valentine's Day begins with Chocolate Mallows.
Whether it's a whole day affair or a dinner date...
It's more beautiful with a Red Ribbon

UPPER GROUND FLOOR, SM CITY STA. MESA


She deserves all the love in the world.
I Love You Kate
Goldilocks

UPPER GROUND FLOOR, SM CITY

LEVEL 2, SM CITY STA. MESA

LEVEL 3, SM CITY STA. MESA

LEVEL 3, SM CITY STA. MESA

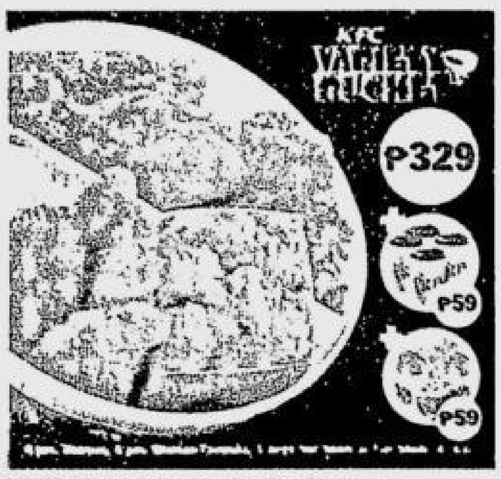
UPPER GROUND FLOOR, SM CITY STA. MESA

Dine & Celebrate w/ us on Valentines Day & get your Heart Shaped Tikoy for FREE!

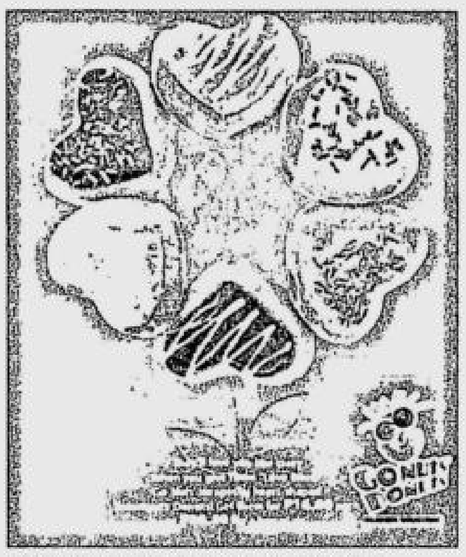
SM STA. MESA
3rd Floor SM Centerpoint
Araneta Ave., Quezon City

Visit us: 3rd Level SM Sta. Mesa

LEVEL 2, SM CITY STA. MESA



UPPER GROUND FLOOR, SM CITY STA. MESA



UPPER GROUND FLOOR, SM CITY STA. MESA

up to 50% off great selections
3 day SALE

february 16 • 17 • 18

Mall hours 10am - 10pm

SM City
STA. MESA

FILL UP RAFFLE COUPON OR TEXT SM TO 2366 & GET A CHANCE TO WIN 1 OF 20 MP3 PLAYERS

PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 0372, SERIES OF 2007

TOKYO TOKYO
UPPER GROUND FLOOR, SM CITY STA. MESA
"MASARAP YEN"
PROMO RUNS UNTIL FEBRUARY 18, 2007
PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 5414, SERIES OF 2007

UPPER GROUND FLOOR, SM CITY STA. MESA

UPPER GROUND FLOOR, SM CITY STA. MESA

LEVEL 3, SM CITY STA. MESA

SM SUPERMALLS